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The Week-end Review

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THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

THOUGH all the European Powers with possessions on the Abyssinian frontiers are "interested" in her dispute with Italy we shall be surprised if they come to blows over it. Similar imperialist disputes in Africa have usually resulted not in war but in the partition of the native State. In this case the badness of Abyssinian Government and the survival of the slave trade in Abyssinia should provide particularly good excuses for the extension of European control. (The fact that the slave trade could not exist without the connivance of the European Powers through whose territory the slaves pass on their terrible journey to Arabia, may be conveniently kept in the background.) On the immediate issue Abyssinia has offered arbitration and Italy put herself in the wrong by refusing it. Abyssinia has appealed to the Council of the League which will have to decide which party started the fighting and whose territory was violated. As the frontiers have never been defined, this second and more important question will be even more difficult to settle than the first. We may expect a long controversy and a compromise. How far Italy will prove amenable to the League we do not yet know; her diplomatic tactics, coupled with the massing of force on the Abyssinian frontier, is at present unpleasantly reminiscent of Japan in Manchuria.

The Freedom of the Seas

To balance Japan's denunciation of the Washington Treaty there has come good news from the United States regarding that notorious bone of contention, "the Freedom of the Seas." Precisely what the President has in mind is as yet by no means clear, but that any change in the American attitude towards this rock-bottom item of policy should even be in contemplation is of great interest. Optimistic commentators have interpreted the move as meaning that America is about to abandon her historic stand on the principle which led to war with Britain in 1812, and might easily have done so again in 1916 and remains a quite likely cause of future conflict. It seems improbable that America is preparing a dramatic climb-down, which would amount, after all, to admitting the British view of the right of search. What appears to be a more probable interpretation is that the President proposes to invest himself with the prerogative to act in the matter as he may deem right in any given circumstances—that is, for instance, that he would have the power to take control of shipping in the event of overseas disputes and prevent American ships sailing into dangerous waters. Even if this is all that he intends, it is significant for the shaping of events following the breakdown of naval talks and the new situation developing in the Pacific. It is also a striking reinforcement for the principle of the collective system. The existence of the Kellogg Pact has always made the American case for the Freedom of the Seas precarious. In any case, the new United States move gives practical recognition to the growing belief that there can be no neutrals in the next war and appreciably narrows the gap that still separates the State Department from full co-operation at Geneva.

Another Purge in Russia

The rumours, which had been prevalent for some time, of the arrest of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and others of the "Old Guard," were confirmed by an official announcement in Moscow last Saturday. These men, we are now informed, were implicated in the treasonable agitation which resulted in the shooting of Kirov. There is apparently not sufficient evidence to convict them of being privy to the actual assassination; but they are held to have been active in "anti-party" intrigues (which means reviving their old movement against Stalin), and they will be—or already have been—exiled to remote parts of the country. At the same time there will be another large-scale purge of the Communist Party. What then becomes of the original story of a conspiracy hatched by foreign enemies of the U.S.S.R. which was advanced in justification of the wholesale reprisals for Kirov's death? Was this all a mistake? Or were there two distinct "plots"? We may learn more of the truth presently; for the moment we can only deplore the vengeance that has already been wreaked on so many people and hope that the "purge" is not going to result in another great batch of executions. Apart altogether from the humanitarian aspect of the matter, these secret trials and shootings are a depressing sign that the Soviet regime has not yet outgrown the savagery of its infancy.

Hopes in Jugoslavia

High hopes were raised by the political crisis in Jugoslavia last week. The reactionary Prime Minister, M. Ouzounovitch, was at last forced to resign, and his successor, M. Yevtitch, was known to stand not only for the promotion of friendly relations abroad, but for a more liberal policy at home. In this he had the strong support of the Regent, Prince Paul, who was actually in consultation with Opposition leaders. The omens pointed not merely to a restoration of constitutionalism, but to what is an urgent need in Jugoslavia, a "National Government," which would include genuine representatives of the Croats and Slovenes as well as of the Serbian Democrats. But the "Old Gang" have not been so easy to dispose of, and the new Cabinet is a disappointment. It is, nevertheless, diluted with some better elements, and it has already made an admirable gesture in releasing Dr. Matchek, the Croat leader, who was sentenced in the spring of last year for Separatist agitation. Moreover, the Regent is still pursuing his approaches to the chiefs of the various Opposition parties; and if he and M. Yevtitch play their cards skilfully, they may go far to heal the racial dissensions that have been a curse to Jugoslavia—and to some of her neighbours—for so many years.

Insurance for Farm Workers

The next step in the development of the system of relieving unemployment will be the introduction of a special scheme for agricultural workers. The Unemployment Insurance Statutory Committee has been for some time at work on a draft scheme, which is to be based on reduced rates of both contributions and benefits. This is inevitable if farm workers are to be insured at all; for out of their meagre wages they could hardly afford the standard contributions, and there would be an immense outcry from the farmers if they were called upon to pay the regular rates. Apart from this, agriculture is bound to need somewhat different provisions from those appropriate to industry, because agricultural employment is so largely seasonal, and the mere extension of the existing rules to agriculture might lead to a great increase in dismissals during the winter months. This problem, indeed, is now bound to arise whether agricultural workers are insured or not; for their inclusion in the Unemployment Assistance scheme makes seasonal dismissals more easily possible than before. The introduction of an insurance scheme providing lower benefits than those of industrial workers will tend to react unfavourably in the position of farm workers under the Unemployment Assistance scheme; for the help given to them in this way will almost certainly be scaled down in most cases to no more than the amount allowed while they are eligible for insurance benefit. But, until the full scheme is available, we cannot tell how serious these difficulties are, or how it has been attempted to meet them.

A Royal Commission

There are two kinds of Royal Commission. The one is a mechanism for whitewashing or shelving a scandal about which public opinion is awkwardly aroused; the other is intended to discover the vital facts and to lead to action. In announcing the appointment of a Royal Commission on the Traffic in Arms Mr. MacDonald clearly had the first type of Commission in mind. When asked by Sir Archibald Sinclair whether the Commission would have adequate power to compel attendance of witnesses, to take evidence on oath and compel discovery of documents, he replied that he was "working on the declaration made to the House by Sir John Simon on November 22nd." Now Sir John explained that the Government would not allow a "fishing" inquiry and that the inquiry would be appointed to study "the proposal of State monopoly from the point of view of national security." From this reply it seems that the terms of reference are to be so restricted that no report of any value can emerge. We do not even know whether the Commission is to be set up under the Tribunals of Evidence Act of 1921, without which it would not have the powers of a High Court judge to call witnesses and enforce the disclosure of documents. In any case no inquiry is of the least use unless it has the widest possible powers—powers of independent inquiry into the private papers of the industry such as those possessed by the Senatorial inquiry in the United States.

The Position of the Socialist League

It was presumably idiocy rather than malice that prompted some of the reports of Sir Stafford Cripps's latest pronouncement. In his speech at Caxton Hall he remarked that it would be disastrous for the working-class movement if the Labour Party were to split; that the Socialist League would "fight under the banner of the Labour Party and, as long as we are allowed to, we shall remain in the Party." Nothing in the least remarkable or novel about that. From its inception the policy of the Socialist League has been to press a Left programme within the Labour Party ranks: it never had any intention of following the I.L.P. into the wilderness. And yet we find the *Daily Express* reporting Sir Stafford's speech under the headline " Socialist League Flag is Lowered," and saying that " Sir Stafford Cripps apologised handsomely last night for the existence of the Socialist League " ; that he " just took the line of the Labour Party executive." He did in fact nothing of the sort. He reiterated the familiar policy of the League—the policy of emphasising the Socialist elements in " Socialism and Peace " within the Party, and persuading the official leadership to go all out for Socialism.

Married Women and Their Property

Proposals of great importance regarding married women and their property have been made by the Law Revision Committee. The process of emancipating women was carried far in the last century ; but it stopped short of its logical and equitable conclusion. Under the law as it stands a married woman is, as compared with a man or a single woman, in a position both of inferiority and of privilege—but especially privilege. Apart from the right to pledge her husband's credit for necessaries, she can involve him, however innocent he be, in the results of her wrongful acts. She can also cheat her creditors in a way that her husband or her unmarried sister cannot. She cannot (unless trading on her own account) be made bankrupt ; her separate property can—by " restraint on anticipation "—be made to all intents and purposes untouchable by a judgment order. These anomalies are an offence alike to justice and common sense. They ought to have been removed by the Married Women's Property Act in 1882, and we hope that no time will be lost in carrying out the proposal of the Law Revision Committee to put " a married woman in all respects in the same position as an unmarried woman or a man." There is one respect, though, in which we are afraid she will stay put. The Committee (like many married women and all married men, we imagine) are against the lumping together of husband and wife for income-tax purposes. But where is the Chancellor of the Exchequer who will agree with them ?

1934—35

NINETEEN HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FOUR has been a better year, for some people, than it was expected to be. In Great Britain, production has picked up a bit, and unemployment declined a bit. The Stock Exchange has been feeling distinctly happier, and some of the under-gardeners and third housemaids discharged in 1931 have been re-engaged. It is no longer patriotic to economise—rather the reverse, at all events if one " buys British." Christmas trade has been brisk ; and the Government has even afforded a modest little present of money to the depressed areas. There has been rather more milk for the school-children ; and the fervour of public cheese-paring has been somewhat abated all round. We can look forward to a quite cheerful round of speeches from the chairmen of the banks—not, of course, including Mr. Montagu Norman—in the New Year.

In fact, " things " have been better, almost all round. In a world rack-ridden with political and economic troubles, with the threat of war looming nearer and larger than ever, with the United States, despite all President Roosevelt's galvanic efforts, still in a most unholy mess, " things " have been looking up. Released from our servitude to the gold standard, with our industries protected behind a high tariff, with the agricultural countries none the less eager to sell us cheap food, and with Mr. Elliot breeding pigs with almost indecent fertility, we have lifted ourselves up by our own boot-straps, and are able, from our point of vantage, to take, if we will, a quite complacent look at our neighbours. We are much better off than the French, or the Germans, or the Americans, or the Italians. In comparison with the rest of the world, Sterlingaria, the economic Empire of which Great Britain is the heart, seems almost like an oasis of prosperity.

Almost. But not quite. For Durham and the Tyne, Lancashire, the Clyde, South Wales and Cumberland do not feel at all like that about things as they are. The improvement we have achieved has made almost no impression on the mass of destitution in these devastated areas. The chronic unemployed are still there, gasping for doles, with little more hope than before of getting a job. Every port is a-clutter with unemployed seamen and ship's officers and dockers and the like. Every shipyard centre is largely a desolate waste. The banks are stuffed to the brim with unusable money, which no one wants to borrow, though their attempts to find a use for it by buying gilt-edged securities continue to force the rates of interest down. There is more money in use, no doubt ; but firms get it not by borrowing from the banks, but by selling their gilt-edged securities, which the banks must buy. Apart from the specially depressed trades, business is extravagantly liquid. It can finance itself without bank loans, but only because there is so little for it to finance.

In these circumstances complacency, though widespread in the higher political and business circles, is out of place. The patient, who was dying by inches of consumption, has thrown off his attack of pneumonia quite remarkably ; but he still has the consumption. He has shown, let us agree, unexpected reserves of strength ; but the doctors cannot afford to relax their vigilance. He is over this crisis, but he is no nearer being cured. Can they cure him ?

The complacent view is that the patient, having got so far, can be relied on to get better and better and better, until his cure is complete. But can he ? The improvement, so far, has been almost exclusively in the home market and, to a less extent, in markets within the sterling area. Trade with the gold standard countries has positively deteriorated yet further. The outlook in America is wholly uncertain—up and down, and then up and down again. There is not much prospect of any large net expansion in British exports, unless external conditions greatly and rapidly improve. But can we go on getting more prosperous by taking in one another's washing ? Have we so cut ourselves adrift from our age-long dependence on foreign trade as to make that possible in any way ?

Yes, and no. We can, as the centre of the sterling area, advance somewhat further than we have yet advanced, even without an improvement in the rest of the world. We can, by reversing our domestic policy of public " economy," and launching out further with housing, road-making, and other public works, carry the upward movement of domestic consumption a stage further than it has gone so far. We can, by relaxing " economy " at the expense of the employed and the unemployed, and so raising working-class purchasing power a shade higher, help to stimulate demand for British and " sterling area " products, and so recover a little more. But, within the present limits of Government policy, there is not very much more to be achieved in these ways. What imports could be excluded and replaced by British products without an extravagant rise in costs have been replaced. There would be no gain, even temporarily, from pushing protection higher, but on the contrary, definite loss in consuming power.

Of course, if the Government changed into a quite different sort of Government and began doing actively what Mr. Lloyd George, for example, is adjuring it to do, or what the Labour Party, chastened by past failures, might do if it came back to power, the limits to further improvement would be a great deal less narrow. If we would use the resources we have fearlessly, and with a readiness to override obstructive vested interests, we could in the existing situation achieve a good deal. We could launch public works on a really significant scale: we could carry through a drastic reorganisation under public control of our leading industries which are in a mess. We could re-employ the unemployed on cleaning up and re-equipping Great Britain in order to achieve, not the limitation of output, but the adaptation of our industrial structure to meet expanding needs. But we could not do these things unless we were prepared to face and beat down a great deal of opposition from powerful interests to the necessary means of doing them.

To begin with, we should have to unbalance the Budget, and to finance the necessary increase in public expenditure out of deficits—at least, unless we were prepared to go so far as simply to print the necessary money without incurring the obligation of public debt—that is, to resume the bankers' power to make money out of nothing as a prerogative of the State. There is a great deal to be said for doing this—to a limited extent; for assuredly State printing of money is no more inflationary than State borrowing from the banks to finance a deficit.

Secondly, we should have to abandon the idea that a policy of public works ought to be kept strictly non-competitive with capitalist enterprise, and act instead on the principle of doing what needs doing, whether it interferes with the operations of private enterprise or not. In pursuit of this principle, we should have to be ready to socialise industries in need of reorganisation in the public interest, and to set about the public organisation and control of foreign trade.

Thirdly, we should have to take over the banks, and convert them into the instruments of a publicly planned and coherent economic policy of expansion. For, otherwise, bank claims would stand in the way of reorganisation, and the " sound money " interests would almost certainly obstruct a policy of economic development based on what they would regard as " inflationary " finance.

Fourthly, it would be necessary to find men who believed an ambitious programme of expansion to be practicable, and were prepared to carry it into effect; and these men would then have to be given large powers and a fairly free hand.

What is important is that in 1935 the issues and the rival policies should be plainly stated, with a view to the general election that must come before long. A continuance of the present " do-nothing-dangerous " policy will not, under the existing circumstances, bring early disaster to capitalist economy. It is even consistent with some further improvement, though not with a great deal. But it will assuredly do nothing either to cleanse the black spots of chronic unemployment and distress, or to adapt the industrial machine of Great Britain to the new needs of successful living in the twentieth-century world. It holds out only the prospect of persistent, if modified, depression, accompanied by a gradual shrinkage of Great Britain's relative wealth and importance, and probably an increasing difficulty, despite the advance of productive power, in maintaining the standard of living of the British people. That is not good enough, even if there are some people to whom it seems greatly preferable to the coming of a Socialist system.

What, however, is the alternative? A Labour Government; for there is no other. But will it be a Labour Government like those of 1924 and 1931, or one prepared at length to live dangerously in an attempt to get something worthwhile done? The Labour Party is firmly pledged to proceed by strictly constitutional methods; but that need not mean that it is pledged to do nothing of moment. Yet how far it would go, along the lines we have outlined in this article, no one so far really knows. We look to the Labour Party, on which the responsibility for providing an alternative Government rests, to make at least so much plain during the coming year.

A CENTURY OF AIR PROGRESS

(Being an article by Our Special Correspondent in the *Times* a hundred years hence.)

THE alarming increase in air accidents during the last year is a matter of grave concern to the nation. It bears, curiously enough, a striking resemblance to the consternation expressed daily in these columns almost a century ago as to road accidents. The problem of congestion in the metropolis was then two-dimensional and, as such, capable of simple solution. Overways, underways, arterials, bypasses, traffic lights, and beacons (which, by the way, gave to Central London the nickname of The Red Light Quarter—a compliment to their instigator, Mr. Hore-Belisha) are now among the more picturesque aspects of the Old City, and we are apt to forget that they arose from acute anxiety for the safety of the pedestrian and the orderly progress of the then ubiquitous automobile.

To-day it is impossible to take a stroll on any of these thousands of miles of disused concrete highways choked with docks and nettles, without a gasp of amazement at the millions of wasted capital they imply. Surely their ultimate fate must have been obvious? Yet, if a careful study of the records of that time is to be trusted, there does not seem to have been one prophet practical enough to say: " Don't spend too much on your roads, for soon you won't need them." It is true that in the middle of the twentieth century the roads were, to use a picturesque word of that time, " lousy " with cars, just as to-day the Pleasure Coastal Levels are midgy with Gyros; but, none the less, such abysmal lack of foresight is inexcusable.

It was, in fact, not until composite aircraft were first perfected (in 1934) that the trend was seen. Soon these giant vertiplanes, in which each pair of wings was designed as a self-contained freight-carrying glider, and could be automatically decoupled to descend to its destination, while the remainder flew on, revolutionised long-distance high-speed transport. Within fifty years advertisements for the sale of " old world petrol pumps " and " quaint XIX century wayside railway stations " appeared in the columns of this paper. Once the centre of bustle and activity, they have become within a century the refuge of non-conforming individualists, over-stimulated by the rigours of tower life. So the whirligig of time brings its revenges. In a few months the haymaking festival in Whitehall, the gay centre beds of tulips along the Strand and Piccadilly, and the new rockery at the Mansion House will once more remind us how rapid is the march of time. Truly the twentieth century slogan: " Ground for Sport: Air for Transport " has come true with a vengeance.

The profound disquiet with which our forefathers viewed the spreading of London and the " ribbon development " of that time appear fantastic. That it was not immediately checked by the obvious method of building tower cities was due mainly to the fact that the air, as a means of local transport, was quite undeveloped. Until machines could descend and ascend vertically at their destinations, until the principle of vertical lift had been commercialised, the air could not hope to compete with road or rail. Once it did, roofdromes and towers soon followed.

But not without enormous opposition. At that time Dr. Huxley was a boy of twelve at Pinnacle City (then known as Dartington Hall). It was not until twenty years later that he made his famous pronouncement (for which he was held in such derision at the time); " A City is a pity: a Tower is a flower." We owe it to his colleague and erstwhile school friend, Sir Vincent Lewis, then Home Secretary, that the truth of his words did not pass unheeded. It was he who caused the first towers at Hounslow, Highgate, Barking, and Croydon to be built. But even then the advantages of housing 25,000 people with their occupations, amusements, pleasure roof gardens, and homes as a single " city unit " were not immediately seen. It needed war to bring it home.

The significant fact about the terrible Paris raids is that they converted British public opinion to tower building. Obviously large areas with a densely crowded population at surface level were an ideal target for gas attacks. Even if the bombs did not strike their objectives, they could not fail to achieve wholesale murder among the civil population. Then it was seen that to continue surface building was to condemn the generations to come to the most ghastly of deaths; while to build vertically, to concentrate the population into a series of widely spaced towers, was salvation. They would offer an infinitely smaller target to the aerial assailant. Direct hits could be detonated in nets above the roofdromes, while those bombs that fell to earth would explode and their gases disperse harmlessly in the fields. The simplicity and practicability of the plan, against the terror of those days, came as a revelation.

Thereafter tower followed tower, and the intervening slums—those crowded streets with square miles of sordid hovels that had spread like scum over the countryside—were swept away. The earth was reclaimed. To-day St. John's Wood, Ladbroke Grove and Shepherd's Bush are no longer unsightly " residential areas " as they were then called. They have happily reverted to their primitive state of wood, grove, and bush. They have got back their heritage. Only last week the Mayfair Hounds met at Paddington Green, and, after a fine run through Portland Narrows, killed at St. Pancras.

To-day the old City of London is probably the finest amusement park in the world. Its side-shows of bus and taxi rides, its tube trips (straphanging extra), and its dark insanitary buildings provide an endless fund of innocent merriment to pleasure seekers, while the recent Rush Hour Pageant at Ludgate Circus with its crowds of " City Men " with their top hats, bowlers and umbrellas, their shouting, jostling, and bad temper, all complete, has drawn sightseers from the four quarters of the globe.

That this is all now, happily, a relic of the past is almost entirely due to air development. To it we owe our mobility, our health (the lowering effect of living on the ground in rain and fog instead of 3,000 ft. above it in clean air and sunshine is one of the blessings of modern life we are apt to take for granted) and our speed of travel. Its proper control is therefore of the utmost importance. The three-dimensional traffic problem to-day is far more serious and far more dangerous to human life than the two-dimensional problem which so worried our forefathers. Public international transport is, of course, well organised. It is now impossible for any machine to enter or leave the one-way traffic lanes at any point on the continental routes, except at recognised air gates. Such is the perfection of the latest magnetic screens. Besides this the Globe Liners, the Continental Directs and the Local Nationals have their recognised levels and collision is practically impossible. The danger does not arise here. It lies, as it lay in the old automobile days, with the private owner. And here the Levels are sadly in need of reorganisation.

The weekly death roll, which now averages over two hundred, is sufficient testimony to this. Of what use are well-beaconed lanes if Levels are not strictly enforced? It would be better to let pilots fly where they like, as they did in the pioneer days. It is to Levels that the Air Transport Minister must turn if we are to expect any diminution in the present appalling accident rate.

But, apart from this, what is being done to ensure the airworthiness of private aircraft? Obsolete machines are still passed airworthy. Only the other day an old racing tractor with a forward landing speed of thirty miles an hour was seen in the Portsmouth Pleasure Level! There can be no air safety while " safety in flight " is all that is required for airworthiness. The safety of *other people* in flight is the essential.

In our opinion no machine should be registered, much less insured, unless it is fitted with three-dimensional air brakes, three-dimensional periscopes, full-floating aerostats, and a reverse speed equal to at least half its forward cruising speed. Turning indicators are now, happily, required for airworthiness; and we should like to see the magnetic warning signal similarly enforced. This device, which automatically operates a red light in any aircraft when another comes within a spherical radius of five hundred yards of it is, in our opinion, a *sine qua non* of modern aerial safety.

The matter has been pressing for some time; but the recent Maidenhead catastrophe has made it a matter for immediate action. Though the excitement has not yet subsided, the facts now emerge and throw a searchlight on the inefficiency of the Regulations. The case, shorn of all its subsidiary evidence, is briefly this.

A hundred neo-helium house-floats were anchored at 4,000 feet over Boulters Lock. The flood lighting illuminating them had, for some reason, failed. A formation of high-speed Sporticopter owners returning, some time after midnight, from Pinnacle City, in an inebriated condition, jumped the traffic lane, fouled the moorings and liberated seventy house-floats. Twenty Sporticopters crashed with broken rotors, all their passengers being killed. The house-floats set adrift immediately soared to stratospheric levels, where their occupants, *over* 300 *persons*, slowly suffocated to death. At the moment of writing anxiety is still running high, since only forty of the floats have so far come down and the remaining thirty may do so at any moment, causing further damage to life and property.

It is pertinent to ask several questions. How did the Sporticopters jump the lane without engine failure? Was the magnetic screen below the charge level? Was the flood lighting circuit on the same power grid as the lane magnetisation, so that both failed together? Had the Board of Trade regulations as to parachute equipment in helium house-floats not been enforced? Had it been many lives would have been saved. Should house-floats be licensed without adequate deflation and oxygen equipment?

Accidents like this, which recall the old *Titanic* disaster, cannot be countenanced, and the Minister for Air Transport will be doing a service to the nation and the future of aviation if he appoints a special commission to investigate the whole question of air traffic regulations without delay.

CECIL LEWIS

A LONDON DIARY

It was wet under foot but warm, and the sun was peering through. "A fine morning," I said. "Well," he answered slowly, for he was one of those who take the weather seriously, "I don't like this muggy weather myself. It's not healthy at this time of year. It's not seasonable." "Seasonable!" I cried, "may I never hear that word again! What does it matter what season it is if it's comfortable? If it were sleeting or blowing a sixty mile east wind would you be happier? If it were as hot as June and as sunny as it is in the Alps (where the weather's quite unseasonable) would you be miserable? Seasonable be damned. I suppose it's seasonable to grow bald and double up with rheumatism or shake with ague when you are old, but wouldn't you rather keep fit and have a thatch of hair? It's just superstition, that's what it is. Dickens once described ice and snow at Christmas and so you complain of God's sunshine. . . Away with this religion of suitability and seasonableness." Pausing for breath I saw that my acquaintance was some distance away. Perhaps he was shocked. Perhaps he thought me rude. Perhaps he was just catching a seasonably late train.

* * *

A friend of mine who has just been in the North investigating conditions in what are now to be called the "Special Areas" comes back with some harrowing tales of housing conditions there. He made a tour of houses in Tyneside where six and seven people are living in one room, with one or two privies to serve perhaps six families. These are houses which were built for one family and have now deteriorated into holding several—perhaps the worst kind of slum of all. A high proportion of the families of Tyneside live in one or two rooms. What will happen when the Overcrowding Bill is enforced is something the imagination boggles at. There will have to be a wholesale clearance if the law is to be enforced. At present, my friend tells me, some of the really ghastly houses are not scheduled for demolition; yet Tyneside, and Newcastle in particular, is not backward in slum-clearance. The work is going forward well: there are some good housing estates, and voluntary work is wonderfully active, especially the Housing Improvement Trust, under that remarkable woman Miss Jennings.

* * *

One of the worst slum districts in the country, according to all accounts, must have been that on Felling Shore, just outside Newcastle. It was built up on an immense bank of alkali deposit, left by the workings of a former chemical factory and sprawling like a miniature mountain over a vast acreage. On this stinking desert (in damp weather the deposits gave off the smell of rotten eggs) stood row upon row of houses. It was the sight of this slum, my friend was informed, which finally melted Sir Hilton Young's heart when he visited the area. Now, all but a few of the houses are down, and only a topping of brick-rubble remains to add to these gaunt strata which will so puzzle the geologists of the future. It is not only the prevailing unemployment that makes Tyneside a "depressed area," my friend explains. The whole district struck him as being definitely behind the rest of even the industrial areas in amenities. But magnificent work is evidently being done by the Tyneside Council of Social Service, which is reaching a considerable number of the unemployed and giving them a new interest in life.

* * *

On Friday I listened to the House of Commons debate on financial policy. Mr. Attlee opened, but the most powerful assault of argument came from that clever *frondeur*, Mr. Boothby. After attacking the Chancellor of the Exchequer's subservience to the Bank of England, and the mystery in which the Government shrouds its financial policy, he made a powerful demand for capital expenditure on housing for the poor. Mr. Amery, equally discontented, called for the creation of a general staff to co-ordinate and expedite financial policy. We then waited for Mr. Lloyd George. But first we had to listen to a tedious and shapeless speech from Mr. Craven Ellis. When Mr. Lloyd George rose, the old magic worked at once. His speech was chiefly a reiteration of one question—There are still over two million unemployed—what are your proposals? There were no purple passages, but the repeated questions produced the effect of oratory. The Front Bench sat quite motionless, except for a nervous beating up and down of Mr. Chamberlain's hand; and to my imagination, at least, they looked like a huddled class of cowed and guilty schoolboys. When Mr. Chamberlain rose to answer, it seemed that he must give some sign of sympathy, some clear message of hope, for the millions of families who are facing another Christmas with no prospects of employment. There was no word of this, but much self-congratulation, and an expression of faith in private enterprise. There is in Mr. Chamberlain, as in Sir J. Allsebrook Simon, a curious insensitiveness or lack of imagination, which always seems to prevent him saying the right thing. And I fancy that many supporters of the Government went off to their Christmas, uneasy and disappointed, with Mr. Boothby's arguments troubling their brains, and Mr. Lloyd George's questions disquieting their hearts.

* * *

Les Droits du Seigneur of the eighteenth century seem to the twentieth century the kind of infamous nonsense that no self-respecting community would put up with for a moment. And yet, I wondered, after reading a recently published pamphlet called *Trespassers Will Be Prosecuted*, were these rights much more ludicrous or infamous than the right of a handful of landlords to exclude from the mountains the thousands of young men and women who stew during the week in Manchester, Sheffield, Stockport, Oldham, Huddersfield and Barnsley? Those who do not know these moorlands and have never watched the great Sunday exodus into Derbyshire—winter and summer alike—could scarcely do better with one and sixpence than purchase this pamphlet. It can be bought from P. A. Barnes, 10 Stainton Road, Sheffield, 11. It is largely made up of beautifully taken photographs of the moors, and it tells you where are the few footpaths which you may legally follow and where—and it applies to the vast majority of this great area—you may not go, because the landlords are afraid that their grouse-shooting will be disturbed. Every year the struggle is more intense between gamekeepers and trespassers: almost every year the Access to Mountains Bill is introduced into the House of Commons. Lord Bryce first introduced it in 1888, and it has sometimes passed its second reading. Game would still be protected (until shot by its legal enemies) and the Bill contains plenty of safeguards against damage. But it is not through yet and will not be, I suppose, until the House of Lords has gone and we have another Long Parliament with a new broom. Or must we really wait so long? I thought of sending a copy of this little book to each of the grouse-shooters on whose behalf the young men and women of Manchester and Sheffield are forbidden to climb the rocks and tramp the moors. But I doubt if they would see it: sure that their own mountains will be kept private while they are away, most of them are probably just starting off to winter sports on other mountains where there is no danger of meeting young people of an inferior social class.

* * *

The following Reuter's report comes from Belgrade.

> With the approach of Christmas, the Jugoslav State factory of anti-gas apparatus has placed on the market numbers of cheap gas masks of different kinds.
>
> Here are some of the varieties, with prices:
>
> A good, useful mask, without storage box (7*s.* 6*d.*).
>
> The same mask, complete with tin box and straps for carrying (9*s.* 6*d.*).
>
> "More elegant models" at 18*s.* and £1.
>
> For 37*s.* one can buy a complete gasproof costume, blouse and trousers being of strong canvas impregnated with chemicals, mask with triplex glass eye-pieces and special impregnated gloves.

The advertisement states: "Although there is no need for these goods as there is no danger now of war, it is nevertheless good for all citizens to have them."

Oh! Mummy, do look what Father Christmas has brought me! Such a *lovely* gas-mask! CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5s. for the contribution at the head of this column goes this week to Mr. G. E. M. Milner.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

—— ——, of Shoeburyness, applied to Southend Justices to-day for the reduction of a maintenance order under which he had to pay his wife 15*s.* a week. He said he was now unemployed. The Bench reduced the order to 14*s.* 11*d.*—*Evening Standard.*

Monday will bring Christmas Eve, and a surprising number of British dogs are already aware that something festive is toward.—*Provincial paper.*

Can nothing be done to stop the ever-increasing variety of absurd names on the gates of the houses in most suburban districts? Could not the Chancellor of the Exchequer charge 5*s.* a year to the occupier of a house, built say during the past ten years, who has adopted a fancy name instead of a plain number?—*Times.*

Much attention has been drawn to the Bishop of London's statement that attempts are being made to accustom the British public to semi-nudity on the stage, which is foreign to English tradition. What he said was taken down in shorthand, and will be published soon after Christmas in the third book of a series which he is bringing out on Questions of the Day. It will be entitled *Has the Kingdom of Heaven Arrived?*—*Church Times.*

A broken knife was produced at Clerkenwell when two youths appeared before Mr. Pope charged with shopbreaking. "Why don't you buy a British knife?" Mr. Pope asked them. "You had better buy British if you are going in for burglary. This one is no earthly!"—Report in daily paper.

WORD MAGIC

THE pessimists we have always with us, but progress continues in spite of them. Whatever may be said of us, we human beings are a more civilised race than we used to be. Our very language has grown milder. Even when we do the same things as our ancestors, we call them by less barbarous names. This fact was brought home to me when I read the interview with Mr. Shaw in the *Star* about the execution of Mrs. Major. "I've no fault to find with it," said Mr. Shaw, and, when one read this at first, one began to wonder whether man had changed very much after all. Mr. Shaw, however, went on to explain. "At the same time," he said, "I am an opponent of capital punishment, because I am against any punishment whatever." That, one felt, was a fine saying, more in accordance with the temper of the twentieth century, and one told oneself that Mr. Shaw had given perfect expression to the spirit of the new age when he added: "But I am in favour of removing people like Mrs. Major who can't be trusted. Supposing she had been reprieved. What a waste it would have been! People would have had to look after her for life at the expense of the State."

Ultra-humanitarians may object that, from the point of view of Mrs. Major, it does not much matter whether you call her execution a "punishment" or a "removal." By any other name, the hangman's rope, it must be admitted, would feel very much the same thing. At the same time, Mrs. Major is not the only person whose feelings have to be considered. We also owe a duty to ourselves, and it is only fair to us that we should make it clear to posterity that we were not a generation of semi-savages who inflicted barbarous punishment on women. We moderns may still believe in many of the methods of treating criminals practised in less-civilised ages, but we are gradually getting rid of the word "punishment" from our vocabulary. Before long, I hope, we shall also have abolished the word "prison." Even if we keep Dartmoor much as it is at present we shall have achieved a step towards a more humane world if we learn to speak of the place neither as a "gaol" nor as a "prison" but as a "rest-house" or "nursing-home." What a psychological difference it would make to the armed motor-bandit if, instead of being sentenced to three years' penal servitude, he were ordered a three years' rest-cure! And what a difference it would make to us! Should we not feel that we were treating him almost as a friend—that we were behaving not as his vindictive punishers but as his well-wishers? In all such matters it is of the highest importance, whatever one does, to preserve a good conscience, and what better way is there to preserve a good conscience than to find a pleasant word to describe what we do? The pleasant word for the unpleasant thing—to discover this is one of the first marks of civilisation.

Hitler's friends realised this when they spoke of the recent shooting of a considerable number of his old allies as a "clean-up." At first, many people were inclined to look on the whole affair as one of multiple murder. The condemned men were certainly not given a fair and open trial. They were shot as ruthlessly as rival gangsters by a rival gang in America. The thing had undoubtedly an ugly look at first, even to many people who supported Hitler. Then somebody thought of the word "clean-up," and how the situation was transformed as if by magic! Everybody is horrified by murder, but who on moral grounds could object to a clean-up? A clean-up is something of which even a Bishop might approve. It is the kind of thing to which Sunday-school teachers incite their scholars. What was once a crime becomes a duty now that it has been called by a different name.

It is improbable that the politicians of the future, when compelled to kill their opponents, will ever again use the old barbarous vocabulary of murder. It has been noticeable in recent revolutionary movements that even those people who believe in methods of assassination dislike the use of the word "assassination." They do not shrink in horror from the thing, but they shrink in horror from the name. It is useless to try to persuade them that the name is rose-water itself in comparison with the thing. Their consciences would not be at ease if they accepted the traditional nomenclature of killing. And one of the absolutely necessary things to a man about to kill a political opponent is an easy conscience.

Killing, it seems to be generally agreed, is to go on, but at least let us disguise it in phrases befitting the progressive spirit. Have they not already made killing almost harmless in Russia by calling it "liquidation"? I know people who are so tender-hearted that they think that fox-hunters ought to be hanged, drawn and quartered and who at the same time, if you mention the fact that a number of human beings have been shot somewhat abruptly in Russia, explain with an ecstatic smile that of course it is necessary for a revolutionary government to liquidate the enemies of the State. Certainly the word "liquidate" is about as innocent a word as could have been chosen. It suggests something simple, businesslike and necessary. Half the bitter memories will go out of history when some historian appears with enough intelligence to rewrite the terrible stories of the past in modern terms. The Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day will cease to seem a bloody and barbarous affair when we see it merely as an instance of liquidation efficiently carried through. Mr. De Valera himself will become a partisan of Cromwell when he learns to think of him as the author of the great Irish clean-up of the seventeenth century. As for Socrates and Joan of Arc, say of them simply that they were "removed," and you will at once have a better understanding of the point of view of their enemies. There is nothing good or bad but phrasing makes it so.

Again, consider war and the importance of discovering the right vocabulary in order to be able to wage war with a good conscience. Everybody, it is agreed, hates war, particularly an aggressive war. I doubt if there is in these days a single European statesmen who could begin an aggressive war until he had convinced himself—or, at least, his followers—in the first place, that he was a passionate lover of peace, and, in the second place, that it was a purely defensive war on which he was about to embark. It was a very able statesman who first thought of the phrase " a defensive war." The phrase can be used to justify almost any war in history. " Give me a war," said the wise man, " and I will find you the pretext." And the phrase, " defensive war," is the eternally incomparable pretext. The Germans before the last war seemed to most people outside Germany to have a fairly aggressive Government at their head, but they saw themselves apparently as a nation struggling gallantly to defend itself against a host of enemies who plotted to encircle and destroy it. Even to-day German children are taught that the Germany of 1914 to 1918 was in the position of an innocent, peace-loving citizen compelled to defend himself against a mob of bloodthirsty polyglot bandits. Men who begin an aggressive war object to being called the " aggressors " as strongly as men who resort to political assassination object to the use of the word " assassination." If war continues in the future, it will be war, we may be sure, in which there are no aggressors : the war of the future will be war between two sets of defenders, both passionately devoted to peace, and both magnificently provided with those great instruments for the furtherance of peace—the bombing plane, the tank, and the long-range gun.

A friend of mine, a strong pacifist, recently provided me with a more agreeable name for war even than " defensive war." Horrified by Hitler's treatment of the Jews, he expressed the wish that France would intervene and send troops into Germany to smash Hitlerism. " I shouldn't call it war in such circumstances," he said ; " I should call it ' police-work.' " I thought that an admirable idea. Think of war as police-work—honest, useful, well-meaning and humane—and there is no reason why it should not continue for centuries. Who can doubt that a Europe filled with policemen fighting each other will present a much more edifying spectacle than a Europe filled with soldiers fighting each other ? With the help of this new and civilised phraseology war itself will become civilised, and there will be no more need to talk of abolishing it.

Shakespeare understood the magic of words. " ' Convey ' the wise it call " is one of his memorable sentences. " Remove," " clean-up," " liquidate," " police-work "—if we cannot moralise our deeds, we have at least begun to moralise our names for them.

Y. Y.

THE PROBLEM OF ALBANIA

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT.]

ALBANIA is a stepchild of Europe ; most backward and in many ways most tragic of Balkan countries. Her conditions are known to few and no one seems to care about her destiny. Yet this little State of 1,000,000 inhabitants with an annual Budget of only £1,000,000 will probably for many years remain one of the worst war danger-points in Europe.

It is not necessary to be very inquisitive, travelling down the Adriatic, to discover how many grounds for friction there are between Italy and Jugoslavia. One cannot talk to a Jugoslav about politics for more than five minutes without hearing a bitter outburst about those ridiculous Italian enclaves down the coast, their only justification Italy's " strategic needs " and the tradition of the Venetian empire. And, on the reverse side of the medal, I landed at Zara, on the return voyage, with an Italian diplomat. His first words on stepping from the seaplane, with a circular sweep of the arm, were : " What a tragedy that we've only got these few poor square miles round here ! "

In Albania the post-war years have seen a constant, persistent attempt by Italy to translate my diplomat's aspiration into fact. Though the country is only 12,500 square miles in area and seamed with mountains, it possesses valleys and plains that could be made the most fertile in Europe. Could be made, because the greater part of the best land is under perpetual menace of inundation, and methods of cultivation are as primitive as anywhere in the Balkans. Great tracts are covered with forests of scrub oak, beech and pine, but the fewness of roads makes the cost of cutting prohibitive and timber is even imported. Finally, the system of social organisation—tribal in the north and feudal under the Beys of the centre and south—does not make for initiative in the development of natural resources.

To overcrowded agricultural Italy, all this presents an irresistible bait. Moreover, at one time or another she has been promised or led to expect either an open protectorate over Albania or even complete sovereignty there. The promises, like a good deal of the hectic wartime bribery, have vanished into thin air, but ever since the Peace the Italians have been trying to cash in on them.

There was the Treaty of Tirana, now lapsed, which gave Rome the right to intervene to uphold the Government in Albania, should it be menaced. There was a 50,000,000 gold franc loan from a private Italian group to help develop the country, and later, in 1931, a 100,000,000 gold franc Government loan, interest free, to be paid in ten annual instalments and used to balance the Albanian Budget. And a host of experts—most of them dismissed early this year—was sent over to supervise the public works and the training of the army.

It must be obvious that should this movement develop into a real protectorate a clash between the Italians and the Jugoslavs would be inevitable. There was a number of reasons why this has not occurred. First, the economic crisis and Italy's financial difficulties have held up the expansionist policy. Only two instalments of the Government loan were ever paid, and then not in full. Secondly, King Zog, who is a man of outstanding capability, has pursued a brilliant trimming policy between his powerful neighbours. Thirdly, the Italians must have realised that Albania would in any case have to be something of a long-term investment, and its choicest fruits could not be gathered till after some cultivation. And, lastly, they have not so far dared to press for the carrying through of their biggest plan, the establishment of an Italian agricultural colony in the central Mousequija plains. The farthest they have gone has been to stimulate the appearance of a constantly recurring paragraph in the European press stating that a number of Italian families are about to be established there. The number grows. It started at 5,000 ; the last time I saw the paragraph, in September, it was 100,000, almost half the population of Albania.

Before asking what is the Albanians' point of view on all this, it may be as well to state a few historical facts. Albania is not, as many people seem to believe, an artificial entity, set up because of German jealousy of Slav expansion to the Adriatic. The Albanians are a distinct branch of the Indo-European stock with a language entirely their own. Their handicap in the general Balkan fight for freedom has been that whereas the Greeks were able to draw confidence from their classical glories and the Serbs and Bulgarians from their mediæval empires, Albania has been for thirty centuries uneasily subject to alien rule. She has furnished Egypt with a ruling family, Turkey with twenty grand viziers and most of her best soldiers ; but the only real Albanian national tradition till 1912 was Skanderbeg's heroic fifteenth century stand against the advancing Ottoman hordes.

The Albanians, then, realise that they must have foreign aid to develop their country. But Italy, they will tell you, has given her assistance so tactlessly, so self-interestedly, often so inefficiently that there is anything but a desire for the connection to persist. As one friend put it to me : " The Italians have spent millions of money to buy this country, and they have only bought its hate."

You can find instances of this on every side. The Italians are under contract to supply Albania with coinage. Some time ago they sent over a gold coin which actually bore on one side the Lion of St. Mark. It had to be withdrawn. The roads they have built in the country, Albanians will tell you, may be good roads, but they are all strategic. They radiate, not from Tirana, which is a good natural capital, but from Durazzo, where Italian troops would disembark. Much of the expenditure of the loans, it is alleged, has not only been wasted, but has been deliberately designed to put money back into Italy's pocket. There was no real need, you will be told, for government buildings on quite such a grand scale as the Italian-built ones in Tirana, nor was it really necessary for the capital to boast the broadest boulevard in the Balkans. And it was only after millions had been spent on the Shkumbini River irrigation scheme that it was found that water would not flow into the Kavaja plains—because Italian experts had expected it to run uphill. You will even hear it suggested that these pieces of Italian inefficiency were deliberate, designed to put Albania under the necessity of fresh borrowing, which would eventually involve her inextricably in the Italian grip.

On her land side, Albania can now regard Jugoslavia and Greece as moderately good neighbours. True, in the past they have had their plans for partitioning the country, for appetite grows by what it feeds on, and there is a considerable Albanian minority in Greece and one of 700,000 in Jugoslavia. The Jugoslavs, however, are now confining themselves to a watching game and to discriminating against Albanians in the administration of their land reform scheme. Albania is too poor to receive the exiles, and in September twenty Albanian families were passing through Istambul every week on their way to re-settlement in Turkey.

The politicians of Belgrade, of course, must watch—and they watched very closely during the "Durazzo incident" of last July. They realised that, in possession of Albania, Italy would be able to close the Adriatic. Opposite Valona the sea attains its narrowest, only forty-seven miles; the bay is an admirable anchorage. And for years the Italians, with no shadow of legal justification, have occupied the little island of Saseno, which they have fortified to command its entrance.

Peace for the future would seem rather perilously to depend on two factors—the ability of Italy to restrain her appetite and the life of King Zog. The King is doing everything in his power to develop Albania and give her a national consciousness. Agricultural co-operatives are being started; part of the army is to be turned into a land labour corps; very slowly the agrarian reform law is getting to work, and education is penetrating even the remoter mountain valleys. But Europe's last real monarch is at the moment the only outstanding leader in his country—and he is unmarried and has no direct heirs.

Whether, were he to die, national unity would survive; whether Albanians would be capable without him of resisting the centrifugal pull of faction and local sentiments; whether in that case Italy would be able to abstain from open intervention—these are questions few would care to answer. One thing is almost certain, that the passing of Albanian independence would bring us face to face with something very like another 1914.

RONALD MATTHEWS

Correspondence

"THE END OF AN EPOCH"

SIR,—As one contemporary with the "Modern Age," represented by "Aldous Huxley, Mr. Joad himself, and other reactionaries," I am glad to felicitate Mr. Harold Stovin on his pungent reply to Mr. Joad's complacencies in your previous issues. What a different world it would be if all such pontifical nonsense had the gas let out it so effectively as Mr. Stovin has done!

Mr. Joad indulges in a solemn jeremiad, because the misguided youth of to-day no longer dances to the intellectual barrel-organ of the post-war period. Personally, I feel this is one of the few good things that have come out of it. I am thankful to hear that the young men of to-day no longer listen to those rusty tunes, or rather to the one rusty tune in the repertory of the intellectuals. And what music! Whoever is turning the handle, whether T. S. Eliot in *The Waste Land*, or Aldous Huxley, who has never been able to bury his grandfather's theories, and goes on dishing up his punctured fallacies in biology, sociology and anthropology just as though Sinai had handed them as an heirloom to the Chosen Family, or the literary interpreters of the worser nightmares of Freud, what dreary variations upon the single theme! With a few exceptions it has been a literature of decomposition, and Mr. Joad comes strutting on the scene to give the barbarian horde of to-day his episcopal damnation because it will no longer listen to his pet priests. Mr. Stovin is right. Mosley owes a larger debt to Bloomsbury than to Petticoat Lane. The bad science, the sterility, the ashen flavour, the downright nihilism of this literature are partly responsible for such growths as Fascism.

And Mr. Joad bemoans its loss of "leadership"! Brilliant is has been, like the phosphorescence of decaying matter, and that makes its bankruptcy in creative or positive values the more lamentable.

H. J. MASSINGHAM

SIR,—Mr. Harold Stovin's letter revives an impulse I felt to offer, as a Modern Antique, one comment on Mr. Joad's articles. Modern youth, Mr. Joad suggests and Mr. Stovin frankly declares, is woolly or pulpy in its ideas. It craves "Leadership" and is eager to cling or clot round the coat tails of any prophet or boss who can furnish it with some effectually hypnotic formula. Its condition resembles that of the caterpillar in the pupal stage so enchantingly described by Mr. Grant-Watson in your column above Mr. Stovin's letter. The caterpillar's organs—Modern Youth's brain—are dissolved into yellow jelly, prepared to reshape themselves into the form of the future imago. All good wishes to M.Y. for that critical process.

Contempt of the young for the old is natural and salutary; and it would be absurd to treat it as a subject for controversy. But Mr. Stovin must apparently harbour an abnormally active Oedipus complex; otherwise it would be hard to conceive why he should have taken Mr. Joad's articles as a text for an attack on the Modern Old, whom Mr. Joad, so far from invoking, declared to have no influence over either intellectuals or Philistines of to-day. Mr. Shaw, of course, is inevitably dragged in. His flamboyant spectre is a stock property of these neurotic infantile nightmares. No doubt he "waffles," but only the curious ignorance of the history of the Socialist movement which I had occasion to notice in my last letter to you can account for Mr. Stovin attacking him for a "refusal to substitute an alternative in action." Which brings me to my intended comment.

I admit I do not feel sure what class of young people are intended precisely by Mr. Joad and Mr. Stovin. If they coincide with the social section referred to as having between 1918 and 1926 believed Mr. Bertrand Russell to be a profound and important philosopher, I should not regard them as an ingredient of crucial importance in our national life.

At the widest, both writers appear to restrict their reference to a particular stratum of the community, corresponding with that to which the Fabians of two generations ago, including myself, belonged; the University-going offspring of the middle-class bourgeoisie. (Incidentally, the Fabian Society was not created by "Leadership." It arose from the co-operation of a number of individuals of considerable independence of mind who had already taken some trouble to think for themselves and who pooled the common measure of their conclusions.)

Far less, I believe, depends on the mental plight of that particular class that Mr. Joad indicates than he recognises, or than Mr. Stovin appears to conceive. Mr. Shaw, to pick up Mr. Stovin's assumed symbol of the Effete, is representative of a definite body of propagandists who have very decided notions as to the lines of progress and action "in terms of immediate practical politics" necessary for our nation—broadly speaking the Socialist Labour Party, whose members are of much more weighty importance than "Modern Youth" (in the limitation to which I understand these commentaries apply). The mass of that party is not intellectual sub-bourgeois at all; it is Trade Unionist, W.E.A. and parliamentarian. It is not pulpy; it is not casting about for "Leadership"; it is represented to-day in Parliament and the industrial world by vigorous and hard-headed men; it is in no danger of Buchmanism, Tubbyism or Boy-scoutism. Anyone who reads the full reports of debates in Parliament or the proceedings of Party

Conferences can point to a dozen men of all classes of the highest intelligence and determined vigour of purpose. The younger members of that party will read George Lansbury's book, *My England* (when it gets to a cheap edition), as they did Robert Blatchford's *Merrie England* forty years ago, and they will not want any " leader " to drum them into a coterie. If. Mr. Stovin does not think the Socialist Labour Party adequately constructive I should like to inform him that one of my aging juniors, Mr. H. G. Wells, whose convictions also he believes to be " purely negative," has constructed what he thinks a superior programme, which he described as *The Open Conspiracy*—just as open a conspiracy, Mr. Stovin will observe, as was the Fabian programme, and is that of the Labour Party; not a regimented movement under a boss or leader.

If Modern Youth believes, as Mr. Stovin protests, in the value of reason and is not impressed by these programmes, what we Ancients would like to see is some attempt on its part individually to employ its own brains in application to social facts as the constructors of our Socialist movement did in their youth and as all men and women who have to work for their living under Capitalist Industrialism are increasingly doing for the sake of their own lives. Unquestionably the existence of two million unemployed is for that class as great a handicap in that process as our public school education is for Mr. Stovin's young friends. Mr. Shaw and the rest of us older Socialists having from about fifty-five years ago, under the impulse of congenital sensibility to phenomena and sympathetic compunction, taken the trouble to think and observe may surely be allowed to " waffle " a bit now and then to relieve the ghastly tedium of contact with the pulpiness and illiteracy of the celebration of Modern Youth—the worse than-grasshopper burden of this bleating of " Lo ! Here " or " Lo ! There " or " O Where " and " O Where is a Leader ? "

" The kingdom of God is " (inspired mistranslation !) " within you." The Socialist Labour Party is democratic and has never acquired or tolerated, in any section of it, leaders or bosses (the one possibly apparent exception was not encouraging; but H. M. Hyndman had to break ground almost alone).

I should like to ask Mr. Joad and Mr. Stovin—What precisely is the section of Modern Youth you are talking about and what is its national calibre ? and to ask Mr. Stovin—Do you consider the British Socialist movement constructive or not, and if not adequately constructive, what kind of great constructiveness do your young friends desire if they are to remain master of their own thinking and criticism ? OLIVIER

Wychwood, Selsey Avenue,
Bognor Regis.

THE SPANISH RISING

SIR,—Your replies to the statements made by Mr. Douglas Jerrold in your issues of December 8th and 15th contain inaccuracies which I beg leave to correct.

In the first place, there is no connection whatever between the recent Spanish rising and the way in which that country was ruled between 1923 and 1931, or with the separation of the Church and the State, or with the power which, according to you, the Church and the Jesuits exercised in my country before 1931. The revolution, whether in Barcelona, in Madrid or in Asturias, had nothing whatever to do with all this; and it is equally absurd to say that the stakes in the recent civil war were the democratic benefits which had been fought for elsewhere in Europe in 1789 or 1848. Anything less democratic than Spanish revolutionaries, or their methods and ideals, it would be difficult to imagine; and, consequently, Liberal papers which do not condemn them may be accused, quite fairly, of being either anti-democratic or ignorant of the real facts of the situation. The same applies to the idea that those revolutionaries were " struggling for freedom," as you seem to believe.

If the Socialists and the leaders of the rebels do not countenance the gross excesses committed by the latter, I suggest that, in future, they should arm their followers with pea-shooters, not with rifles and machine-guns, dynamite and bombs, which are dangerous weapons and liable to do much harm. Moreover, they should not incite them to destroy the existing order of things, nor threaten to resort to violence and revolution, as they have constantly done in Parliament, in the papers and on every occasion in which they have thought fit to do so.

It is nonsense to say that " many of the alleged rebel atrocities have been invented in Catholic newspaper offices in Madrid." Certain reports may have proved unfounded, which is not to be wondered at if we bear in mind that, in Asturias, the revolution extended over a period of ten days, and that there were 40,000 armed rebels in that district alone; apart from which the sad truth is that practically all the atrocities reported have been found to be authentic. On the other hand, I would ask you to either substantiate or withdraw the charge that " wholesale massacres were carried out by the State's Moorish troops."

Finally, I have been authorised by Señor Gil Robles to deny the allegation which you make in your issue of the 8th to the effect that his party, " at its February congress of this year took an oath to suppress the parliamentary system in Spain." LUIS A. BOLIN

London, S.W.7.

[Señor Gil Robles's disclaimer is interesting. According to reports in the *Manchester Guardian* and elsewhere, the February Congress of the *Acción Popular* party at El Escorial (computed by Spanish papers of the Right to number about 20,000) stood with upraised hands and shouted an oath which began " Down with Parliamentarism."

As to the Moorish atrocities we refer our correspondent to the recent incident in the Cortes, when a Radical Democrat deputy, Sr. Marcos Miranda, asked the Government to make an official investigation into the behaviour of the Moorish troops following their entry into Oviedo. Sr. Miranda told the Cortes that he had just returned from Asturias and in Oviedo learnt beyond any dispute that no fewer than 80 persons, including women and children, all innocent of any offence or part in the rebellion, had been killed by the Moors and Legionaries as they entered the city. Uproar followed this statement; Sr. Miranda was accused of being an " anti-Spanish " traitor, and the Minister of State, Don José Rocha, replied that his statements and proposals for an inquiry were *improcedentes* (contrary to usage and damaging to the prestige of Spain). The House refused an inquiry, but not before Sr. Marcos Miranda had declared that he would put the matter in the hands of the law courts and that he was willing to submit to any penalty imposed on him should the courts find his accusations false. It is most unlikely that the courts will ever investigate these charges—the murders of Spaniards by Moors in Asturias (the only region never conquered by the Moorish invaders of the Middle Ages) have already severely hurt Spanish pride and it is natural that the clericals now controlling Spain should wish to hush it up.

As to our correspondent's second paragraph, it seems unnecessary to reply to an argument that a revolutionary rising had no connection with the historical circumstances in which it took place or with the issues in dispute at the time. We should not expect a correspondent of the *A.B.C.* to admit to the invention of atrocities in Catholic newspaper offices. As we have said, we have no doubt that some rebel atrocities took place. We have good reason for believing that others were invented.—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

POLICE BIOGRAPHY

SIR,—A police correspondent of the *Times* informs us that the Metropolitan Force suffers greatly from an inferiority complex traceable to the Victorian environment of its barracks and offices. I feel with you, Sir, that it is wrong that the police should continue to suffer, and I make a proposal more economical than that of the writer to the *Times*, who intends to rehouse these unfortunates over a period of ten years in buildings indistinguishable from the offices of our great banks (a nice thought but extravagant).

The remedy is a very simple one and properly applied might be very beneficial to humanity as a whole. It is well known that the police do on occasion have access to the private correspondence of their fellow-citizens. They thus have in their own hands opportunities of knowing the real lives of men and women which are denied to the most fashionable of psychoanalysts.

I suggest, Sir, that this knowledge, put to a proper and systematised use would at once resolve their own spiritual discords and be of the greatest assistance to the future biographer. It is well known that the latter, faced with the difficulty of recreating the lives of the great dead is generally forced to the unsatisfactory solution of inventing his facts.

From my own experience I would like to suggest how by a happy combination the difficulties of the policeman and the biographer may both be overcome.

I am an author, undistinguished, and of course, unhappy, but I cling like others of my kind to the hope that one day popular fancy or a publisher's unexpected advertising surplus may bring me fame and immortality. It will then, of course, be necessary to think of my duty to the future and the materials for a proper biography. Incidentally, I have written a biography myself of a rather low foreign personage who achieved some fame in the post-war turmoil. In compiling it I found the police archives of his country a great help (revolution having thrown them open to the vulgar).

Then in contemplation of my own case, I suddenly realised my unique and unfair advantage over all my contemporaries in the matter of providing materials for a biography. For I have reason to believe that for many years now earnest investigation officers in the Post Office have read every scrap of my correspondence before delivering it. Dogged detectives from Scotland Yard have from time to time observed the kind of company I keep in my house, and, more occasionally, the route I take home o' nights, while my telephone conversations are a constant source of instruction to them.

Think of the opportunities here provided if only this system could be extended to all men and women of letters in our country! We should know all the intimate details of their lives and loves, their relations with their parents, their financial position (very sad this last) with absolute precision. Do we need to write a biography? All we do is to take a file from the archives of Scotland Yard and all the materials are ready to hand, the truth certified by unimpeachable evidence, it being well established that police evidence is the only kind which is infallible. Biography, in accordance with the tendency of the age, thus becomes a science.

How, you ask, would this affect the inferiority complex of the Police Force? Why, Sir, the answer is plain enough. If they can only be thus brought to see themselves as the trustees of the future, as students of human nature who for the first time have reduced the study of man to an exact science, far from feeling inferior they will feel very demi-gods. Why spend public money on building new homes for them? Man can rise superior to his environment. Immortal works have come out of the British Museum reading room, why not out of Scotland Yard?

After all, in recent years, by rejecting the unfortunate tendency to mockery of sacred institutions first shown by the irreverent Sherlock Holmes, literature has done much for "the Yard," as it is now affectionately known to the great reading public. Let the Yard repay literature by enlarging its incomparable network.

I beg you, Sir, to use your influence to see that this system ceases to be an exception exercised in my favour and that it is at once extended to all those numerous men and women more worthy of such earnest study and whose lives and work will prove more enlightening examples to posterity than my own.

RALPH FOX

STALIN—SHAW

SIR,—Mr. Spender raises the question why Russian statesmen learn from experience and correct their mistakes whilst our British statesmen never learn anything and repeat their mistakes again and again. I suggest that it is because the police, the army and navy, the education authorities, and the clergy are on the side of the mistakes. I explained to Stalin that the reason Mr. MacDonald does not make a revolution is that the police, being regularly paid, won't let him.

I do not wonder at Mr. Spender feeling sad when he thinks of the suffering the Russian people might have been spared if Lenin had followed up his reading of the Webbs' *History of Trade Unionism* with their later works. But think of all the death and disease and degeneration and suffering that might have been prevented in these islands if our rulers had read the Webbs, or indeed read anything except perhaps the more fatuous leading articles in the *Times* and the *Morning Post*! Think of the fact that the Great War, with its millions of deaths and mutilations, might have been avoided if Sir Edward Grey had done what I told him to do in 1913! Why do I count for nothing, and Mr. Wells for nothing, and Bertrand Russell for nothing, and the Webbs for nothing, whilst the most ridiculous Dunderheads and Diehards rule the roost?

Can the leisure of an old Liberal find me an answer to that?

G. BERNARD SHAW

P.S.—As to my abhorrence of vivisection, it is not relevant. A vivisectionist is an idiot who claims exemption from moral law for any proceeding which results, or may possibly result, in an increase of knowledge. For instance, if I crucify a vivisectionist, I shall learn what a vivisectionist looks like when he is crucified, and what effect the prospect and actuality of the operation has on his language, his temperature, his blood pressure, his alkalinity and so forth. Therefore he must admit that this addition to knowledge completely justifies me in crucifying him.

What disgusts and distresses me about the business is not so much the Sadism in which the preference of vivisection to humane methods must have originated, as the visionless imbecility of its social doctrine, its gaping credulity that no extremity of failure and infamy can shake, and its notion that a frame-up in the laboratory accompanied by the sacrifice of a guinea pig is not only scientific evidence, but the only sort of evidence that can be admitted as scientific.

I am a disciple of Mr. F's Aunt: I hate a fool.

VOLUNTARY STERILISATION

SIR,—It is beyond question that sterilisation is the simplest, the most certain, and by far the most satisfactory form of permanent birth control. For men the operation involves no mortality and very little inconvenience: for women it involves only the very slight amount of risk associated with the competent administration of an anaesthetic and the opening of the abdomen. Once done, however, it cannot be undone. And therefore it is unsuitable as a contraceptive method for those who wish to have a properly spaced family.

Since voluntary contraception by other methods is legal, in suitable circumstances why should the best and most satisfactory method of birth control be still an illegal operation, and consequently one which is open to the rich on account of its simplicity and safety, and closed to the poor on account of its cost?

It still has to be shown that if general voluntary sterilisation were legalised, there would be any material diminution in a population which the present economic system is unable properly to support. The experience of those doctors who devote a large proportion of their time to birth control (1,000 cases a year), is definitely that women want children and that under proper conditions nothing will stop them having children. The number of people who ask for birth control advice from purely selfish motives is almost negligible, and leads one to conclude that only such a negligible proportion would submit to voluntary permanent sterilisation. Such people anyway are not fit to have and bring up children and the community is better without them.

Sterilisation for eugenic purposes is an entirely different problem, and in the interests of clear thinking and progress the two issues must not be confused. The Departmental Report on Sterilisation (the "Brock Report") advocates voluntary sterilisation for certain types of mental and physical defects: the report is both authoritative and unanimous. It contains all the information at present available, and it is unlikely that any more material data could be produced or conclusions reached until its suggestions have been put into practice. Only by experiment can further facts be elucidated.

The legal position of a doctor who at present sterilises a patient for any of these reasons is deplorable. As I understand it, an operation performed on a man or woman with the sole and limited object of sterilisation is, under an old Act of Parliament, "maiming" and therefore illegal. The patient's consent to such an operation does not affect the situation one way or another, because the consent of two parties to an illegal contract does not make it legal. Such an operation may be contemplated in the interests of, or to preserve the health of, either party. What interpretation can be given to this last clause has not been recently decided in the courts, but it is likely, as Lord Justice Aitken has pointed out, that should a patient die the surgeon would be liable to a charge of manslaughter.

Here then, is an example of the sort of dilemma in which a doctor is placed: I was consulted by the family of a man who was harmlessly insane but uncertifiable. He was willing to be sterilised. He had three normal children, and there is no evidence that his abnormality is transmissible. One of his symptoms was that he insisted on marital relations with his wife several times a day. The wife was naturally distracted by the idea of having a child by a man in such a condition and if the situation had been allowed to go on it would have broken up the home, the very worst thing that could have happened to the man himself. I consulted a senior and very wise colleague on the subject and his reply was as follows: "It would be much better to sterilise the woman and say it was done for her health's sake. If you sterilise the man, who is obviously unstable, he may get back on you somehow or other. In as much as he is insane, he is unable to give his consent, and in as much as he is sane you have no business to sterilise him."

Again, I was consulted by a man with hereditary deafness about which there was no question. After a year or two of engagement, he and his fiancée were perfectly miserable because they could not get married. As a result of years of bitter experience the man refused to bring children into the world with the prospect of their facing the misery of permanent and early deafness. His fiancée agreed with him. He wishes to be sterilised, get married and adopt two children.

There are many people in a similar condition who, rightly or wrongly, absolutely refuse to run the risk of bringing into the world children who may later become insane, and they say that the strain of two powerful impulses pulling both ways is becoming too much for them. Eugenic sterilisation apart, the same thing holds good for people who have always over their heads the possibility of producing children whom they can never hope to support. Under present economic conditions there are millions of people who can never earn £5 a week, who have three or four children, and may at any moment have more. These people are often too unintelligent and their privacy too limited for ordinary birth control methods to be safe and satisfactory.

Under these circumstances happy family life is impossible to all but the few. If the woman has infected Fallopian tubes from the last pregnancy or the inevitable attempt at abortion, she can be legally sterilised. She then becomes well, good-tempered, serene and happy, literally a changed person.

What harm would come from the open and legal sterilisation of such people?

In actual fact this question can only be answered precisely by experiment, and there are plenty of willing subjects who would individually benefit. Occasional persons might regret it as they do many other irrevocable acts like the marriage service in the *Book of Common Prayer*, but the law and the Church do not step in to prevent these people taking an irrevocable step. They are allowed to choose for themselves, perhaps after the possible consequences of a hasty decision have been pointed out. Why, then, should the law and the Church use all their influence to prevent these people from taking another irrevocable step which is fraught with no more danger to themselves or the community than is a stupid, ill-considered marriage?

H. W. S. Wright

FLOGGING

Sir,—I was glad to see that you drew attention to the inaccuracy of the figures relating to floggings which the Home Secretary gave last week in the House of Commons. By omitting all judicial floggings and confining himself to those inflicted for breaches of prison discipline, he not only gave a false impression of the extent of the use of this form of punishment, but indicated that corporal punishment is on the decrease. Actually the very reverse is the case. Judicial floggings increased from thirteen in 1930 to sixty-three in 1932, the last year for which figures are available. The Government acquiesces in this startling increase in the use of the "cat," but does not consider it necessary to find out by an impartial inquiry whether there is any evidence that it is effective even as a deterrent. If we are to tolerate ever-increasing barbarity in our penal system, at least we are entitled to some proof that it serves the practical purpose of preventing crime. The immorality and indecency of flogging is another story. On the question of deterrence, it is difficult to understand why the Government should refuse an inquiry if they are sure of their case.

The public conscience has been stirred and it will not be soothed by vague assurances from the Home Secretary, especially after the discovery that the only solid "fact" he gave turned out to be fiction.

Cicely M. Craven,
The Howard League for Penal Reform, Hon. Secretary
Parliament Mansions, Orchard Street, S.W.1

BRITISH "ADMINISTRATIVE LAW"

Sir,—The public has been somewhat mystified by the recent "fuss" made by Lord Hewart. His protest cannot, however, be ignored, for although this particular incident seems an unfortunate one, the principle of the vesting of a multitude of important administrative functions in the Lord Chancellor is clearly bad. Lord Hewart points out that the work is generally done by the secretary of a secretary. There is obviously no one adequately responsible to Parliament.

Within recent years large powers of administration have increasingly been thrust on such bodies as the Board of Trade, which appoints Official Receivers in Bankruptcy and decides all kinds of matters only partly relevant to trade, and from their decisions there is no adequate appeal. The Charity Commissioners have a mass of important inquisitorial and administrative functions. Vital matters for the poor are dealt with by all kinds of Health Insurance and Public Assistance Committees.

The Chancellor's department appoints County Court Judges and Registrars and manages the smallest details of accommodation and procedure of these important courts. It also manages the estates of infants and lunatics, and a plethora of other important odds and ends. All these bodies are building up their traditions of procedure and law in their administrative and semi-judicial tasks.

It is clearly time that the English ceased repeating that they have no "administrative law" like the unfortunate foreigner. It would be much better to realise the growth of such law and procedure during the last half century, owing largely to the expensive and cumbersome procedure of the Law Courts. This heterogenous collection could then be systematised under a Minister of Justice responsible directly to Parliament. Questions relating to our ancient and cumbersome legal methods could be directed in the Commons to someone whose sole function would be to see that the rights given to a subject by statute or common law were enforceable with reasonable speed and expense. He would also be responsible for advising Parliament each session on what was required to bring the law into conformity with the morality of the day. This one hopes is better, and in any case is different from that of the middle of last century when the bulk of present principles of statute law were laid down. Lord Chief Justices do not often make a "fuss" and the recent episode could well be made a starting point for long-needed reform.

7 New Square, Ambrose G. Appelbe
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Miscellany

A FRIEND OF ELIA

(*Charles Lamb died on December 27th*, 1834)

In the summer of 1803 when England was threatened with invasion by Napoleon, and the British Navy was equally determined that it should not take place, a merry party consisting of Charles Lamb and his sister, with various members of the Burney family, embarked on the packet-boat at Southampton for Cowes. Among their number was fifteen-year-old Martin Burney, of a wayward disposition, but full of high spirits, and a certain fondness for the classics which he had imbibed at the Classical Academy kept by his famous uncle at Greenwich. Although his introduction to the Lambs had only taken place a few months earlier, Lamb was so struck with his character and disposition, that he admitted him into the Elian circle at once. Throughout his life Martin remained one of his most intimate friends. "He is on the top scale of my friendship ladder," wrote Lamb many years later.

Among his slender kit in 1803 the boy had secreted a small volume of Terence to enliven the proceedings at Cowes (and possibly as a counter attraction to Lamb's quips and oddities), which he persisted in rendering "out loud into canine Latin" at the meal table, much to the joy of his parents, and the distraction of Lamb and his sister. Lamb at this time was in his 29th year, while Martin's father, Lamb's "Admiral," was then 53. A serious illness in childhood had affected one side of Martin's face, though his intellect was brilliant, and Lamb is reported to have remarked that the boy was "begotten upon a mermaid," while Southey described him as "the queerest fish out of water," but "a sharp lad." By 1806 Martin was firmly installed in the Lamb household, and when Charles and his sister were busy with their *Tales from Shakespeare*, Martin would be seated by them, vainly seeking for some inspiration that would enable him to emulate in a humbler degree the brilliancy and wit of his master. Three years later he accompanied the Lambs on a visit to Hazlitt at Winterslow, and although he borrowed five pounds for the journey, the money was well spent. The great essayist became his firm friend. Torn between the literary and the legal profession, he embraced the latter, but like many legal gentlemen of to-day, he frequently suffered pecuniary embarrassment. On one occasion it is recorded of him that while strolling in Lincoln's Inn Fields, he encountered Lamb and his sister, and was forced to borrow four pennies in order to provide himself with food. An amusing incident between Lamb, Hazlitt, and Martin, occurred in 1814. Lamb, ever generous, had promised to review Wordsworth's "Excursion" for the *Quarterly*, and in due course an advance copy arrived. Hazlitt was equally anxious to review it for the *Examiner*, and owing to a breach between Lamb and Hazlitt at this period, the services of Martin were enlisted. The result was that in one of his "few caprices wild," Martin came in the night "and made holy theft of it," but, added Lamb, "we expect restitution in a day or two."

Martin's career to some extent was blighted by an unfortunate and hasty marriage in 1816, but the lady's name is unknown. It estranged him from his parents, but not from Lamb; nothing could shake their friendship. "How obstinate M.B. is," observed a visitor. "He's an excellent fellow," said Lamb, avoiding the point. "But he's so obstinate," reiterated the speaker. "Well," replied Lamb, "I like a good solid obstinacy. Something may come of it. Besides—there's something to quarrel with." Procter records that Martin, a great lover of books and literature, "eschewed the showy and artificial, and looked into the sterling qualities of writing." To him Elia, in spite of their intimate friendship, was always *Mr.* Lamb. When Lamb's works appeared in two volumes in 1818, the second volume (the first was dedicated to Coleridge) was dedicated to "Martin Charles Burney, Esq.," in a sonnet that will for all time enshrine his name, the concluding lines of which run:

> Free from self-seeking, envy, low design,
> I have not found a whiter soul than thine.

It is given to few men in their lifetime to receive such a graceful and beautiful tribute. Martin seems to have mastered the gastronomical, if not the literary, art, with great success. He had a gargantuan appetite, and an episode unforgettable to Hazlitt took place at the old Southampton Coffee House, where a certain Moravian preacher was forced to remove his coat in order "to eat beef steaks on equal terms with Martin Burney." Martin's legal career soon fell short of expectations. He entered at the Inner Temple, and was called to the Bar in 1828. He enjoyed the friendship of Mr. Serjeant Wilde (afterwards Lord Chancellor Truro), whose briefs he used to read, and Lamb owed his introduction to Wilde to Burney. His chambers were at 10 Lincoln's Inn, his neighbour being Bryan Procter, and in 1829, while staying with the Lambs at Enfield, Lamb in one of his Latin letters pathetically requests Procter to inform Martin if any stray client turned up. His excellent taste for good literature has already been remarked upon; that it must have been something quite exceptional is shown by the fact that Hazlitt, Southey, and Lamb all emphasised it. In one of the most charming of the *Essays of Elia*, Lamb draws a touching picture of Martin in his younger days, too poor to purchase books, reading through two volumes of *Clarissa* at a bookstall, and being finally disturbed by a too attentive assistant inquiring whether "he meant to purchase the book." When Hazlitt lay on his death-bed, Martin was the "faithful companion" to whom he dictated his last letter. After Lamb's death Martin contrived to have "Wednesday evenings" in the best Lamb tradition, when the company was ministered to by Mrs. McGinnis, "a tall, raw-boned Irishwoman," who acted as hostess and housekeeper. Towards the end of his life Burney undertook to report the proceedings of the Rolls Court for the *Times*, a duty which he performed till within a few weeks of his death on October 20th, 1852. He sleeps under the turf of St. Margaret's, Westminster, but although the stone that marked the spot is now removed, his memory will be perpetually preserved in the pages of his beloved Elia.

G. E. MANWARING

CONJUROR AND CO.

It is the mountebank's season. I use the word in its original and honourable sense. I mean the fellow who climbs a bench (or dais) and sets about us with his quips or his conjuring; of course he is throwing dust in our eyes and deceiving the public, like any politician. Chicanery is his stock-in-trade, duplicity his duty. He would be cheating our pockets if he failed to cheat our senses.

England, supposedly so solemn, is really a great home of mountebanks and drolls. We are, though nobody seems to know it, a nation of diners-out. The big popular restaurants have dozens of rooms which are filled night after night with Masonic gatherings, clubs, societies, and sodalities of all kinds. The entertainer is an integral element of the feast, quite as important, quite as inevitable as the sole and chicken. He or she has a friendly audience, since public dinners make up in quantity what they lack in quality. The house is full; it has slaked appetite and thirst: and the entertainer has merely to face the dubious rivalry of after-dinner speeches. Even if the lady is only going to shriek at us about larks in spring, that is briefer and better than the "I well remembers" of old So-and-So, who has to be asked to speak—confound him! If the entertainer is a droll or mountebank, he is a darling before he starts—and sometimes even when he has finished.

It is a considerable profession. At one such dinner recently I came across a comedian whose work in a pierrot party I had greatly enjoyed and praised a summer or two ago. This Mr. Harry Brunning is a mimic and clown of rare talent (his Lloyd George might be the animate version of a Low cartoon) and I innocently wondered why he was not at the top of the music-hall tree. I inquired whether the after-dinner job was not precarious: did people publicly dine (with mountebank) on Mondays and Tuesdays as well as on Fridays and Saturdays? It appears that nothing will stop them. They are always at it. My friend was engaged throughout the winter, sometimes passing rapidly from one banquet to another during the same evening. If you work up a good connection, it is a sound business, and in the summer when the suburban lawn-tennis clubs are playing lawn-tennis instead of dining at the Friscadero, you rejoin the Concert Party and settle down for a good long summer on the pier-head. Your minor Pierrot, wandering from Shrimpton to Prawnville, a week at each, may sing for a supper that is mainly bread and bloater-paste, but the established Pierrot, with a guaranteed season at one of the big resorts, has a good time of it and, I hope, ends up with a benefit night just when the August crowds are thickest.

Frequently there is an after-dinner conjuror and this, of course, is his especial season, for now he gets the afternoon work too. You will see him in prosperous suburban avenues, with his bag of tricks in hand, hurrying from one children's party to the next. It is a ticklish audience. It is one thing to make magic on the decent aloofness of a theatre-stage or on the dais at the far end of a huge public dining-room; quite another to be confronted, in the close quarters of a crowded drawing-room, by some inquisitive boy who has eyes of needle sharpness and employs his place in the front row to be nosing into everything. However, three parts of his audience are easy money; to produce the flags of all the nations from a cylinder of white paper affords them ecstasy unqualified. A few card tricks, too, will go a very long way. There is no need to do the big stuff, put his hostess-employer in a box, and saw her in half, though, if he had the equipment, this historic piece of surgery would doubtless be vastly enjoyed. He can get along easily with the magic decanter which delivers any form of liquid that may be ordered, easily unless that brat in the front row starts to put his long nose right inside it. The children nowadays are taught chemistry so young; they are late in learning to read, but they have inquiring minds, which is what the Party Conjuror least desires.

Most adults make a good audience for the conjuror. We are perfect simpletons and our manners forbid us to intrude.

Even when the magic is performed beneath our noses, we cannot catch the fellow out. I have had a magician sever a cord beneath my eyes; a second later the two strands were perfectly united. It cannot have been the same piece of cord, yet it demonstrably was. Conjuring of this kind is far more imposing than the elaborate business with boxes; the less the machinery, the greater the magic.

It is the oldest of professions and comes, bearing mystery, from a dim Chaldaean past; kings owned conjurors as well as chamberlains. The court conjurors of Pharaoh could keep pace even with Moses and Aaron; when the latter, Jahweh assisting, turned his rod to a serpent, Pharaoh called up his man and "the magicians of Egypt they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod and they became serpents." Every man, not just a star-performer. It was a talented court. But Aaron's rod-serpent next devoured their rod-serpents, which was definitely unprofessional conduct. It was as though some wretched child had introduced a monster and a cannibal rabbit to destroy the conjuror's coney and even eat the top-hat. Anti-semitic feeling must have run high in the Magician's Union at the court of King Pharaoh. I fancy that much subsequent trouble has come to the Jews from the goings-on of Jahweh.

He simply would not play cricket.

What becomes of the Party Conjuror when the Party Season is over? The leaders of the profession have their music hall appointments and the public dinners offer limited opportunities. But what of the lesser men who are now carrying their petty wonderments to the prosperous suburban houses? Their time ends when the school term begins. Do they keep toy-shops? Do they help to collect the income-tax, turning rods to scorpions, and powerfully evoking unpunctual cheques from an unlikely assemblage of over-drafts? But perhaps it is tactless to inquire. The mountebank leaps to his bench and cozens us for a living; it is part of his allurement to be a mystery-man who comes out of nowhere and to a darkness returns. We must not ask a conjuror to betray his secrets.

IVOR BROWN

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Lorna Doone"

In spite of some admirable photography—fine shots of rolling Exmoor hillsides, a magnificent reaping scene and a cheerful harvest-home, followed by a banquet in the best traditions of Old English good cheer—*Lorna Doone* (a Basil Dean production now showing at the Adelphi Theatre) is a film for little nephews and nieces, back from their preparatory schools, rather than for the more cantankerous and hypercritical type of adult film goer. Mr. John Loder has too debonair a talent to be very well suited to the part of "Girt Jan" Ridd; while Miss Victoria Hopper, as Lorna herself, gives a performance somewhat excessively pale and primrose-like, considering she had been brought up in a den of thieves. . . . As a "Western" film in fancy dress, the picture has points; and the outdoor sequences, on the whole, are brisk and exciting. Scenes taken inside the studio are less successful; and the snow-scenes suggest a disaster to a sugar warehouse.

"Blackbirds of 1935" at the Coliseum

The new Blackbirds show is better than its predecessor: it will probably please the indiscriminating, and it is certain to enchant the fastidious. Here is a perfection of movement. The precise, complicated and subtle rhythm drummed by the dancing toes of the Four Cobs is a ravishment. Peg-Leg Bates uses one leg more skilfully than most star dancers use two. And Kahloah is an equatorial gazelle—no, a tropical mermaid, for her movements have the effortless appearance otherwise found only in the silky movements of fish. The *danse du ventre* is usually ugly without being exciting, but the rippling of Kahloah's muscles is the most exquisitely *troublant* spectacle that a connoisseur could hope for. You cannot compare the most magnificent Congo carving with a Donatello, or these dancers with the Russian Ballet. But within their limitations they are equally complete, equipped, flawless and delightful. The singing is not so remarkable as the dancing. Edith Wilson is a true artist, but we are not given enough of her, and Valaida we see rather too much. She not only sings, but dances, acts, plays the trumpet and conducts the orchestra in a version of the Rhapsody in Blue, a composition, by the way which is not wearing at all well. Her vitality is extraordinary. The chorus is the most seductive in London, and the various shades of their coffee and pale chocolate skins are far more lovely than the "pinkish-grey" expanses laid bare in the ordinary revue. I have left to the last Nyas Berry. His dance in the *Happy New Year Blues* is a staggering achievement; he has the smoothness of a turbine, the buoyancy of a cloud. This revue can be recommended to all who recognise style when they see it.

"The Bing Boys" at Alhambra

It is not until the spotlights turn pink and the auditorium is flooded with the strains of "If you were the only girl in the world" that "the Bing Boys" achieves significance, and then, one feels, remembering the steamy spectacles and the odd glitter in the eyes of the people about one, that criticism is impertinent. Here was a hotch-potch of competent tunes, simple-hearted jokes and brisk dancing intended to divert the crowds of soldiers who spent their leave in London during the war. It is calculated to evoke memories in its audience, and in this it is supremely successful—more so, let us admit, than the formalities of the Cenotaph or the calculated roystering of the Festival of Remembrance at the Albert Hall. Otherwise—and this is addressed to those who were too young, or too old, or too otherwise-engaged to have seen the show during its original run—*The Bing Boys* is poor entertainment for 1934 or 1935. Rebla, who plays in Alfred Lester's part, is moderately amusing, except when he juggles and is superb. George Robey is perhaps as funny as ever—I cannot be sure whether the change is in him or in myself. Violet Loraine, apart from her tremendous appeal for sentimental reasons, shows again her supreme talent, particularly in her quite delicious parody of an opera-singer at practice. The piece follows its rather tedious course with complete slickness, and a well-drilled chorus relieves tedium at intervals.

Circus at Olympia

Bertram Mills's circus at Olympia is much better than last year; there are many wonderful and lovely performances and very little one would wish away: chiefly the elephants. A country circus is a show for village children who have never seen such beasts: London children can ride on elephants in Regent's Park, but they are melancholy performers producing in the spectator a feeling of involuntary respect for an ancient, long-suffering, peaceable aristocracy. But many animals are a pleasure to watch: Kling's tubby chimpanzees pedalling their little bicycles with hands or feet, or roller-skating superbly. And then the flashing mischievous ponies tossing their tails and manes and plumes, plunging and waltzing. But the great attraction of the circus is that the circus people are healthy, perfect specimens of what human beings should be: what thighs, what muscles, what deep grooves in the girls' backs! There is greater skill here than can be seen in any sport: one Raspini walks down an inclined plane on a ladder and balanced on his head another Raspini standing on *his* head. Olivido Perez gives an imitation of a drunk man walking a slack wire. Albertis's act is lovely and one fancies one might learn to sway from one side to the other of Olympia at the top of an enormous steel pole. And the tumbling Dutchmen with immense skill are frantically and insanely clumsy—one of them becomes entangled in as many as five chairs at once. Then the clowns—who appear and are gone too soon, after drenching each other with water. Divine imbeciles.

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, December 29th—
Song and Pianoforte Recital, Victoria and Albert Museum, 3.

SUNDAY, December 30th—
Olaf Stapledon on "Humanism and Superhumanism," Conway Hall, 11.

MONDAY, December 31st—
Winter Season of Promenade Concerts, conducted by Sir Henry Wood. Wagner Concert, Queen's Hall, 8.

TUESDAY, January 1st, 1935.
Haydn-Mozart Concert, Queen's Hall, 8.

WEDNESDAY, January 2nd—
Bach-Handel Anniversary Concert, Queen's Hall, 8.

THURSDAY, January 3rd—
Brahms Concert, Queen's Hall, 8.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE *Portrait of an Age* by G. M. Young, which is the editor's contribution to *Early Victorian England* (2 Vols, Oxford Univ. Press, 42*s*.), is an essay wittily, conversationally and allusively written for the educated reader in which Mr. Young disguises rather than displays an erudition which ranges from such subjects as the date of the first chapel tea-fight to Aristophanes' definition of Sidney Herbert. The following sentence seems to me to be as good an abstract statement of the forces behind Victorian Literature and Art as one could get:

> On one of its sides Victorian history is the story of the English mind employing the energy imparted by Evangelical conviction to rid itself of the restraints which Evangelical conviction had laid on the senses and the intellect; on amusements, enjoyment, art, on curiosity, on criticism, on science.

The means employed was most often I think that sense of humour which reached its height in Early Victorian times and which has never been equalled since. We find it at its best in *Pickwick* and in Dicky Doyle. Compared with *Brown, Jones and Robinson*, our humour shows itself as thin, and either whimsical or cruel. (A. A. Milne or H. M. Bateman.) From America, indeed, there has come in Thurber another and more original form of humour—the madman's—which it seems reasonable to suppose will correspond more closely to modern conditions. But the Victorians were genial and warm, and their humour embraced and played equally upon all classes. Early Victorian humour survived indeed for more than half a century among the poor, and may still be found. The street-arab's and the soldier's humour are of the all-embracing Early Victorian sort—and for the same reason since theirs is called forth to render endurable almost unbearable conditions.

* * *

The most ridiculous period in history is at all times, I believe, something between forty and seventy years ago, in which the courtship of the parents of men who are now elderly took place. No doubt the psycho-analysts can furnish reasons for this empirical observation. It is noticeable that in the seventeen years which have elapsed since the publication of *Eminent Victorians* the age they represented has become less inherently ridiculous to our eyes. Oscar Wilde, Ouida and General Booth already seem more preposterous figures than Manning, Florence Nightingale and Dr. Arnold. The focus is thus continually changing: the long-lived among us have a good chance of seeing themselves as friends of the great comic figures of the Great War, but none can hope to survive long enough for distance to lend enchantment to their youth. Thus our attitude to Early Victorian manners, ideas and art is rapidly changing. Etty, for example, is a painter whose name one sees frequently in print; fifteen years ago he was not often mentioned.

* * *

Mrs. Peel in *Homes and Habits* and Bernard Darwin in *Country Life and Sport* make free use of Prince Pückler-Muskau's letters as an authority on English life, though the description of Count Smorltalk at Mrs. Leo Hunter's party might have deterred them. One has an uneasy feeling that we may be going to hear of Peek Weeks and the poet Snowgrass. Mrs. Peel's account of the homes of labourers might have told us more about their furniture, and when speaking of the rich she is a little too inclined to remind us of the hip baths and grained yellow hot-water cans which many born in this century must have used themselves. Sir John Fortescue gives an excellent account of the Army, with a vivid sketch of the Crimea war.

> They sat down before Sevastopol, with a strong garrison and a complete arsenal in their front, and the whole might of the Russian Empire in their rear. The entire plan imposed upon the Allied generals was simply insane, and they knew it to be such.

In the second volume Mr. Kellett tackles a really important subject in *The Press*. His account of the London Papers is admirable, but he might have given more space to the provincial ones which were of much greater importance then than now. The *Manchester Guardian*, in particular, deserves more than a few sentences, since it was of considerable importance in the history of Free Trade and of the Anti-Corn Law League. Both the first and the second editor of the paper joined the League with Cobden when it was a week old. The most delightful thing that Mr. Kellett has unearthed is that Karl Marx carried on a vendetta against Bakunin, in which he accused him of being a Russian spy, in the columns of the *Morning Advertiser*, a paper which "was not to be found in clubs, nor in the best stationers' shops, but was the journal *par excellence* of the public-house; and there is not a public-house where a copy of it is not to be found." As Mr. Kellett observes:

> These recriminations must have been bewildering to the jovial and not too erudite *clientèle* of the paper.

* * *

I remember some years ago riding down Oxford Street on a bus, with a friend, a most original writer on aesthetics, who used to jab his fingers at the passing houses and stammer out in anger: "That's all that bloody man Rus-Rus-Ruskin." And Mr. Richardson, who contributes an extraordinarily well-balanced and impartial article on Architecture, tells us that poor Ruskin was well aware of his responsibility.

> One of my principal motives for leaving my present house is that it is surrounded everywhere by the accursed Frankenstein monsters of indirectly my own making.

Mr. Richardson succeeds in being extremely fair, even to those architects like Scott, whose work still causes us a certain amount of daily discomfort. In considering the Greek and Gothic Revivals, we must bear in mind:

> The architectural camps of Victorian times were not divided on the subject of revival, *qua* revival, of antique art. The main contention was Medieval *versus* Pagan. . . . The attempts made by both classic and Gothic factions to reinstate historical motives amounted to scene painting on the great scale.

If architecture was romantic and pictorial, pictures were literary. This was because artists were swept away by the mass of new ideas which were animating everyone. Most artists are poor judges of ideas and ill adapted to expressing them: their originality more frequently representing an instinctive attitude rather than an articulate philosophy, but it was impossible for artists to be divorced from their age:

> To the new Englishman of the late forties and fifties, a travelled man brought up on Carlyle and Tennyson and the romantic classics, the world was a far more interesting place than it had been to those late Augustans, imprisoned in their island, among whom Evangelicalism struck root. . . .

And as Mr. Young also points out, Tennyson completely represents and expresses this wide interest, for he was not only steeped in contemporary romanticism but also understood the workings of the new scientific mind.

> In Memoriam is one of the cardinal documents of the mid-Victorian mind, its ardent curiosity, its exquisite sensitiveness to nature and, not less, perhaps, its unwillingness to quit, and its incapacity to follow, any chain of reasoning which seems likely to result in an unpleasant conclusion. In his highest mood Tennyson sometimes speaks like an archangel assuring the universe that it will muddle through.

The illustrations of *Early Victorian England* are beautifully reproduced and admirably chosen. The frontispiece to vol. I—*Old Westminster*, by De Wint, lights up the imagination, and all of them help to set one wandering with greater understanding in the age of the giants, of the jerrybuilders, and of the aspidistra, which, introduced from the Far East in the thirties, became and has remained a symbol. The poetry of plants is in their flowers held up for the visits of bee and butterfly, of humming bird and moth. But the aspidistra will not flaunt its sex in this fashion, and because it is furtive it is one of the few plants that is fertilised by slugs. There is a moral here.

DAVID GARNETT

NEW NOVELS

Appointment in Samarra. By JOHN O'HARA. *Harcourt, Brace*, $2.50.

So Red the Rose. By STARK YOUNG. *Cassell.* 7s. 6d.

The New Caesar. By ALFRED NEUMANN. *Hutchison.* 10s. 6d.

The Forty Days. By FRANZ WERFEL. *Jarrolds.* 10s. 6d.

Reviewers have a great capacity for forgetting. Otherwise (one asks oneself) how would it be possible for them to retain their sanity? Surfeited with the recollection of the books they have read, we should hear of them almost every day setting out for the Arctic, the Sahara, San Juan Fernandez, Easter Island, for

> . . . A lodge in some vast wilderness
> Some boundless contiguity of shade

—any retreat where modern literature is seldom discussed and the deciduous flutter of bright book-jackets is never distinguished. Most of the reading they do is largely mechanical. The novel-reviewer attends a literary autopsy on half a dozen unhappy marriages during a single week in much the same spirit as he goes to the cinema, and comes out again as unaffected by his experience. That, he says, was good or indifferent, foolish or fetching. . . . He forgets the story as soon as he returns to his private life.

From time to time, however, a new book arrives which constitutes a *real* experience and—if not precisely a land-mark—at least, a very definite stage in his own personal odyssey. Such was Sean O'Faolain's *House of Simple Folk*; such *The Ladies* by Stanley Hopkins, *How Like a God* by Rex Stout, and Erskine Caldwell's latest volume of short stories. For some months, fiction has been in the doldrums; but now an American novel—one that, to the best of my knowledge, has not yet been announced by an English publisher—makes a hopeful appearance on the further side of the Atlantic. *Appointment in Samarra* is a first novel; and in his narrative Mr. John O'Hara sets out to cut a cross-section through the life of a small American town—Gibbsville, in the anthracite-mining district of Pennsylvania, the home of Julian and Caroline English, Luther and Irma Fliegler, Harry Reilly, Al Grecco, Ed Charney and many others, of British, Dutch, Irish and American-Italian descent.

Gibbsville is—or, at any rate, should be—the hero of the book. Typical of the small American community, still fairly prosperous in spite of the decline of private fortunes and the disasters of the stock market, Mr. O'Hara describes it as an organism both more complex and more rudimentary than a town of the same size in Northern Europe. Its complexity is due to the mixture of races. Superficially, there is a certain air of good-fellowship between rich and poor; but, although Julian English knows Luther and Irma Fliegler by their christian names, they are not members of the Country Club, do not belong to the "Lantenengo Street crowd," or figure in the gossip-column of the local newspaper. With Ed Charney, again, Julian is on friendly and even familiar terms; but Charney, too, moves in a completely separate orbit, for he is the local gangster—a very mild gangster, it should be added—and, backed up by Al Grecco (so called because an enthusiastic female journalist in his boxing days had dubbed him an "El Grecco to the life"), maintains a firm but tactful control of the drink and vice traffic.

Appointment in Samarra, then, begins as a very interesting study of social conditions with which the average English critic is entirely unfamiliar. Here is an analysis of social habits, sexual ceremonies, incomes, personal outlook, the effects of upbringing and race, set forth in passages of detailed disquisition and illustrated by an account of the behaviour of the various characters in their native surroundings. The cross-section method suits Mr. O'Hara very well; and it is perhaps a pity that the focus of the book should shift from Gibbsville itself towards Julian and Caroline English, luminaries of the town's "younger married set," popular, good-looking and, after several years of marriage, still very much in love. During the course of the second chapter, Julian performs the act of *hubris* that prepares the way for the tragedy of the last few pages. He throws a drink in Harry Reilly's face. It is at the club, on Christmas Eve; he is a little drunk and much annoyed by Reilly's attentions to his wife. Such scenes had often been witnessed in the club; and Julian, thinking back over "other terrible things, really terrible things, that people had done . . ." —a list that included "innumerable vomitings, more or less disastrous . . . the hair-pulling, face-scratching episode between Kitty Hofman and Mary Lou Diefenderfer, after Kitty heard that Mary Lou had said Kitty ought to be suppressed by the vice squad"; the occasion when Ed Klitsch had wandered upstairs stark naked and thus presented himself to the steward's wife; and the time Elinor Holloway had climbed the flag-pole—was surprised and hurt that his misdemeanour should be taken so hard. He had not counted on the solidarity of the Irish Catholics; he had not counted, moreover, on the nervous instability of his own temperament—a characteristic which, during the next day or two, was to precipitate him into a series of follies, culminating in a free fight, and threaten to involve ostracism by the whole of Gibbsville.

In the closing episodes of his book, Mr. O'Hara adopts—I think a trifle unfortunately—the somewhat more romantic manner of Mr. Scott Fitzgerald's earlier and most celebrated novels. The disasters seem to be piled on a little too thick; but then Americans—witness their drinking habits and the facility with which perturbed financiers sprang from twentieth-storey windows during the blackest days of the slump—are a romantic and pessimistic race, not without a streak of the pre-war Russian. At least, their equilibrium is almost as ticklish; and Julian's behaviour under the pressure of accumulating difficulties may seem exaggerated only to readers of a nationality that is proud to recognise itself in the sawdust-stuffed personages of the *Forsyte Saga*. To the romanticism and sentimentality of the American temperament, Mr. O'Hara does full justice. His book is a brilliant piece of reporting; his style is vivid, laconic and unfailingly clear. This is a novel that should be published in England without delay; but let us hope that its English publishers will not expurgate it.

Mr. O'Hara writes contemporary history; and it is arguable that history is better presented by novels dealing with the vicissitudes of our own times than by any effort of imaginative reconstruction. The historical novel is a hazardous form. *So Red the Rose, The New Caesar* and *The Forty Days* all attempt to bring back the atmosphere of a long-vanished period or to describe happenings in which the novelist himself has had no direct share. Each is a book of unusual quality. *So Red the Rose,* in spite of its title, is not the flimsily romantic production one might have anticipated, but turns out to be a vivacious and well-written story of the American Civil War; while neither *The New Caesar* nor *The Forty Days,* notwithstanding their immoderate length—they average six hundred closely printed pages—is the ponderous "epic" for which one takes it at first acquaintance. Both of them are books that deserve reading. *The New Caesar* deals with the rise of Louis Napoléon; and students of Professor Simpson's *magnum opus* may be interested by a novelist's version of Napoleon III—the Liberal visionary who made himself an Emperor, the ex-Carbonaro who occupied the throne of France.

Herr Neumann's picture of Napoléon's shady associates and financial backers—personages of whom he was at considerable pains to rid himself as soon as he had ascended to power—is particularly good. He does not over-emphasise the drama of the situation; but one is sorry that he should have allowed Professor Le Bas, the Prince President's ex-tutor, to deliver a prophetic —an almost too prophetic—harangue on the eve of the *coup d'état*:

> Spurious Bonapartism, taking its rise at the middle of this nineteenth century, will be the destiny of the second half of that century; and the Third Republic, which in due time will be its unhappy heir, will suffer from it—as, unquestionably, will Europe at large. You have destroyed the promise of '48, Louis, not only in France, but the world over. . . . You are liberal-minded, and will destroy liberalism; for, as a professedly liberal emperor . . . you will establish yourself as a tyrant. . . . And your corrupted liberalism will have further evil effects, for it has shown itself to be manageable and practical, and will perhaps make even the twentieth century unhappy.

With Herr Werfel, we return to the modern world; and any reader who enjoys an exciting, complicated, well-told story should lay hands on *The Forty Days*—an account of how, in 1916, a mere handful of Armenian peasants, destined for deportation to the Mesopotamian wilds, where they would inevitably have perished, left their villages and, under the leadership of Gabriel Bagradian, an Armenian intellectual educated abroad, blockaded themselves among the rocks of a Syrian mountainside. Here they withstood a vigorous siege. During the siege, which is recounted in absorbing detail, Bagradian's wife—a Frenchwoman—is unfaithful to him with a Levantine adventurer who has joined the camp, and his son, who has run away in a vain attempt to get a message through to the American Consul at Aleppo, is brought back dead. Bagradian himself refuses to accept the chance of escape, provided by the arrival of French cruisers, and dies alone, shot down by the Turks, on his son's grave. . . . *The Forty Days* is very far from being a masterpiece; but it is solider reading than most novels that tend to corpulence.

PETER QUENNELL

THE SCIENCE OF READING

Coleridge on Imagination. By I. A. RICHARDS. *Kegan Paul.* *8s. 6d.*

In the first place, I ought not to talk about this book at all. Psychology, Dr. Richards says (forestalling criticism) is peculiar in that those who are not students in it feel ready so often to correct those who are. He is dismissing Coleridge's critics : but he, too, is a student of psychology—and the conclusion is obvious. But then, what are non-psychologists to do about his book? Simply not read it, or accept its every word ? After all, it contains very little " technical " psychology.

He is especially severe on Pater, who, in a passage certainly rather supercilious, objected to Coleridge's distinction between Imagination and Fancy. " Some English critics at the beginning of the present century had a great deal to say concerning a distinction, of much importance, as they thought, in the true estimate of poetry . . ." and so on. Dr. Richards remarks : " A fair parallel . . . would be this. Suppose a schoolboy, bored with the detail of chemistry, to write : ' Certain people calling themselves chemists have lately had a great deal to say concerning a distinction, of much importance as they thought, between organic and inorganic substances . . .' " etc., etc. But where does the parallel come in ? Chemistry is an exact science : philosophy is not, still less (if possible) aesthetics. Moreover, Pater, far from being of schoolboy status, was an educated man of more than average intelligence and sensibility, who had, like Coleridge, thought much upon aesthetic experience. Doubtless, he was not Coleridge's equal ; but criticism of one's superiors is quite legitimate. And the objection to his superciliousness does not come well from a critic whose own much more arrogant and (indeed) schoolmasterish tone must have repelled many " candid inquirers."

This makes a man unsocial, unpolite ;
Odious when wrong, and insolent if right.

True, Dr. Richards despises the " social " side of criticism ; but one can be non-social, perhaps, without being anti-social.

I may as well take a few more steps towards the bottomless pit by questioning Dr. Richards' whole claim to speak with authority. To suggest that without philosophical or psychological training one cannot rightly appreciate poetry is like suggesting that only physiologists can digest their dinner or give an opinion about the quality of the food. Poetry is a matter of feeling ; we may try to find out why certain poems are good, but we must first feel them to be good—no one in his senses would *begin* with a theory, or stick to it in the teeth of his reactions to the poems themselves. Of course, Dr. Richards is far too intelligent not to see that he cannot, in fact, *prove* a poem good or bad, and too honest, in spite of his pretensions, not to say so. Can we, *at present*, he asks, settle a poem's merits or demerits by arguments ?—" and to this the answer must be a firm No. . . . In no case can theory take the place of judgment." Nothing could be better sense. When he adds, however, of aesthetic theories : " They cannot choose for us, but we cannot choose without them," then one may demur. For the fact appears to be otherwise. But it seems strange in any case that he should claim authority *as a psychologist* in a field where psychology can " at present " give no proofs at all.

His treatment of the Coleridgean Fancy and Imagination hardly, I think, convinces one of their critical usefulness. He analyses Coleridge's examples from *Venus and Adonis :* Fancy, in the passage where Venus grasps Adonis' hand—" A lily prison'd in a gaol of snow " : Imagination, in the star passage.

Look ! how a bright star shooteth from the sky
So glides he in the night from Venus' eye.

In the first, the analogy holds only in one point—the whiteness : in the second, " cross-connections," points of resemblance, are fairly numerous. This simple addition of resemblances *may* (as Dr. Richards contends) make a difference in kind ; certainly the analogy, even in this case, is far from perfect, far from " complete fusion." And it is perhaps unsafe to let imagination even *appear* a question chiefly of metaphor. There are other problems : some of them arising from the latent feeling that " imaginative " should always be applicable to great poetry and the frequent difficulty of making it apply in that sense.

> But if " the sense of musical delight is a gift of the imagination," how is it that it can be given by poems, *Venus and Adonis*, for example . . . or pre-eminently, *The Faery Queen*, which are chiefly works of Fancy ? One answer is that, though a poem may be Fancy as regards the mode of interaction, one with another, of its separable parts, the consistency of its *total meaning*, when it is such that " the sense of musical delight arises," is imaginative. It is thus that Spenser " has an imaginative fancy." . . . But the difficulty still remains that single lines, or passages too short for a larger grace to arise, may possess the power. . . . It may be met, in part, by recalling (*see* p. 110) that the projection of meaning into words is itself an imaginative process.

Surely this is, for all practical purposes, giving up the ghost. The chosen few are to lay their hands on their hearts and say, I hear the voice of Imagination.

It is impossible, here, to follow Dr. Richards through all his remarks on the theory of knowledge and the meaning of meaning—though they provoke argument. His practical criticism is admirable, as usual. In particular, an attack on certain lines of the *Excursion* which appeared in the *Criterion* two years ago is most effectively routed—though in some points it can almost be said to rout itself. The writer, a militant Anglo-Catholic, went so far as to object, *in Wordsworth*, to that thoroughly orthodox phrase, " the living God." It is no doubt a good thing to repel such malicious criticism with its own weapons, though nothing is proved about the poem's merit either way, and the attack itself obviously arose from a perversion, not of the intellect, but of the will. In the same chapter, Dr. Richards protests, very justly and moderately, against Mr. Housman's recent dismissal of " meaning " in poetry ; of course, the loose employment of the word " meaning " was a real stumbling-block, though (Mr. Housman's drift being clear enough) surely not fatal.

If I have rather lost sight of Coleridge in this review, I have followed the example of Dr. Richards, who uses him chiefly as a jumping-off place. He exacts great respect for him as a pioneer, but (having, unlike the unfortunate Pater, authority) seldom quotes him without proceeding to correct his views. Doubtless all pioneers must expect to have their work superseded : on the other hand, such a critic (if you like to call him so) as Hazlitt at his best can never be superseded.

Dr. Richards looks forward to a higher place for poetry than it has ever yet held. " For while any part of the word-picture is regarded as not of mythopoeic origin, poetry—earlier recognised as mythopoeic—could not but be given a second place. If philosophic contemplation, or religious experience, or Science gave us Reality, then poetry gave us something of less consequence." But " if we grant that all is myth," poetry can be, so to speak, our religion. Though feeling on unsafe ground here, may I suggest that he underestimates the importance, in religious feeling, of just that kind of belief which he declares inappropriate —belief that the religion is founded on some kind of reality independent of ourselves, that some at least of its statements are, or will be, just as demonstrable as the crushing power of motor-cars. You cannot take all that away from a " myth " and make no difference. Instead of poetry being placed on the level of religion, religion may well be placed on a level with poetry—quite a different thing. Dr. Richards offers the " true believers " a stone for bread ; offers it with a kind, patronising smile, and the assurance that they will find it just as nourishing—or at least they *ought* to.

K. JOHN

PRE-RAPHAELITE EXTRAVAGANZA

The Rossettis and Their Circle. By FRANCES WINWAR. *Hurst and Blackett.* 18*s.*

Pre-Raphaelite poetry, no less mystic, no less full of symbolism and religious association than pre-Raphaelite painting, seems to be descended out of Romanticism by Doctor Pusey. The Oxford Movement itself was the delayed resultant of various phases of Romanticism : an interest in antiquity (stimulated by the Waverley novels) ; an emotional—though hardly conscious—sympathy with the exotic poetry of Shelley, Keats and Byron ; and, above all, an enthusiastic appreciation of Christianity as interpreted by Chateaubriand in *La Génie du Christianisme*. In much the same way that Newman turned to the study of patristic theology for the revelation of doctrinal truth, the Rossettis, Morris, Burne-Jones and the others went to the fountain head of European painting and discovered beauty only before Raphael in the works of Cimabue, Giotto and Dürer. The poets of the brotherhood derived, in like manner, from Dante, Chaucer and Mallory. And all, painters and poets, seemed to find in the Arthurian legend a special source of inspiration. The sensuous and the spiritual, so oddly married in their painting and poetry, offers an almost exact comparison with the mystical enthusiasm and erudite scholarship of the Tractarians. But in their private lives, with the exception of Ruskin, they were far more boisterous.

It is significant that the year 1848 saw the foundation of the P.R.B. or Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood; though, so far as the brethren were concerned, the revolution which they had effected in English art passed unnoticed among the political revolutions that were everywhere exploding in Europe. The seven original members were Millais, Holman-Hunt, Rossetti, his brother William, Woolner, Collinson and Stephens. They issued a manifesto from which, owing to its obscurities, it is difficult to extract any meaning. But there was to be a return to *Nature* with all the fidelity of representation of the later mediaeval painters, and there was much talk about simplicity. At the same time, their painting was to be a sort of poetry. It was clearly no easy programme to carry out and one which, had it not been for the enthusiastic support of Ruskin, might never have gone farther than the list of Immortals (which was also part of their creed). At the head of the Immortals stands Christ, to whom these forerunners of Baedeker allotted four stars; Michael Angelo, Titian and Leigh Hunt find a place in the bottom class—with no stars at all.

Rossetti, though he did not actually start the new movement, was its master and guiding spirit till his death—though nominally the brotherhood came to an end five years after its formation. Through Ruskin, who not only supported the pre-Raphaelites with the great authority of his criticism but who was ready to buy himself any work of Rossetti's, their pictures almost immediately found a market among the industrial rich, and were even well hung at the Academy exhibitions. But while Millais, becoming more and more popular, deviated from and eventually abandoned the pre-Raphaelite aims, Rossetti was always consistent to the principles he had himself helped to form; and when, in later life, he devoted himself almost entirely to poetry he was still true to his conceptions of art as elaborated, for instance, in *Monna Vanna* and *The Beloved*.

In their lives, as much as in their work, the same curious disharmony of the flesh and the spirit predominates. Rossetti was engaged to Elizabeth Siddal for a decade and married her, to all intents and purposes, on her death-bed. He was attracted to the ethereal beauty of Fanny Cornforth by a shower of pea-nuts which she threw at him in the Strand. Beata Beatrix had another name—that of Guggums. But perhaps the most striking antithesis can be observed during his occupation of Cheyne Walk. Here he devoted half his time to painting, poetry and Nankin; the other half to women, laudanum and a menagerie that must, at one time, have seriously rivalled the Zoo. These animals, ranging in size from a Brahmin bull to a family of white mice, and including such curiosities as a couple of wombats and an armadillo, lived uneasily together in a garden at the back of his house. But not even in this Babel could he leave well alone. The balance, or rather the war, of body and soul—which represented so fundamentally his tortured character—had to be preserved at all costs. And so some of the first, and from all accounts most spectacular and successful, spiritualistic seances ever held in this country took place in his paddock. What was typical of Rossetti was typical of them all. Swinburne, whom *Punch* referred to with monotonous regularity as Mr. Swine-born, that master of the sensuous and suggestive, could only drink away his passion: his affair with the Mencken is not sufficiently authentic to warrant any other conclusion. But perhaps the greatest miracle of all is that—given their heritage, their muddled mystic lives, their continuous conflict between prudity and prurience, their feeble evasions and gross over-statements—so much of their work must find a permanent place in English art.

Miss Winwar is to be congratulated only on her luck in winning the prize offered by the publishers with this book. The first paragraph of the author's preface exactly states the content of her work:

> This is not fictionised history or biography, though it reads like a novel: nor is it a Freudian study of the men and women who played their part in the pre-Raphaelite drama, though the student will detect the methods of modern psychology without those barbarisms that should have no place outside of clinical reports. No statement is made, no scene depicted, that is not warranted by authoritative sources, nor thought process extended that is not implicit in some phase of the subject's work.

If the reader keeps this preface at the back of his mind he may be able to read this book. It will help him, possibly, with the following passage, which is in no way exceptional to the author's style:

> Elizabeth was just seventeen when Deverell discovered her, a fairy creature imprisoned in the shoddy garishness of the cheap London shop. The brethren gasped when he brought her to the studios. . . . Were they grey, her eyes, as Walter said? Not grey, but green, the green of the sea when the sky mixes with it, the shade of an emerald and a sapphire, if they could be merged without letting the sun through, for that would have given a sparkle where there was none, etc., etc.

But even more discordant than the passion-cries which reverberate through every page of Miss Winwar's novelised biography is the tone of superior kindliness with which she examines her pre-Raphaelites. She makes us view the spectacle from a box perilously close to all the bores of that era; but, slightly more tolerant, allows us to smile at rather than censure the absurd extravagances of these child-men. In conclusion: a book which I feel sure only the most hardened reader, and the wretched reviewer, will peruse to the end.

RICHARD STRACHEY

HEDGED BY DIVINITY

Francis I. By FRANCIS HACKETT. *Heinemann.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

King Henry V. By PHILIP LINDSAY. *Ivor Nicholson and Watson.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Mary Queen of Scots. By ERIC LINKLATER. *Peter Davies.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

To the best of my knowledge there has been no English life of Francis I since Miss Julia Pardoe's thorough but somewhat wilful study published at the beginning of this century. A new style of biography has come into fashion since Miss Pardoe confessed that she "dare not comment upon this frightful feature of the reign of Francis," and such frightfulness (which as you have guessed means the relations between the sexes) is now examined closely as an index to character and a bait for the large number of readers who cherish illusions concerning the happy freedom of manners in the bad old days. From this examination Mr. Hackett's subject emerges at last as a king rather than as an amiable satyr, and the old poem about the "royal king who loved a royal sport" is now supplemented by a vivid but critical history of an important figure in an important period.

It is not that Mr. Hackett neglects the frightful feature. Far more than that of his contemporary Henry VIII, the character of Francis I was moulded by women, and the astonishing women of the French Renaissance occupy their just place in this chronicle. But the author has borne in mind that the strongest and most significant of those women were the King's mother, Louise of Savoy and his sister, Marguerite of Angoulême and Navarre. By the death of Louise he says aptly that Francis was widowed, and his study of Marguerite and her influence on her adored brother is one of the best things in the book. He disposes satisfactorily of the incest story, and amusingly of the scandal of the *petite noyre* (which turns out to be a dog) that shared the King's bed during the Spanish captivity. It is curious, however, that he has not found it worth while to refute the equally fallacious but widely held belief of the price that Diane de Poitiers paid for the pardon of her father after the Bourbon conspiracy.

"Francis's greatest frivolity was not his band of ladies or his châteaux in the woods: it was his orthodoxy." Thus epigrammatically Mr. Hackett in effect lays upon Francis the initial responsibility for the Wars of Religion in France. It was, of course, an attitude of policy rather than of conviction, and probably the policy was wrong. But it is perilously easy to impute shortsightedness to a man who lived four centuries ago. If Catherine de Medici had accepted the alliance of Coligny in 1560 the actions of Francis twenty years earlier might now appear in a different light. The biographer can always stand upon a hill and lament the limited vision of his subject in the valley—which leads me to a mild criticism of Mr. Hackett's too frequent use in his narrative of the tense known to grammarians as the future in the past.

But apart from this tendency and the occasional vulgarisms to which a quick-firing pen lends itself, Mr. Hackett deserves warm congratulation for one of the most complete and satisfying portraits which modern historical biography has given us. He has spent nearly five years on his task and he has consulted everything that remains of his period. Against this background of careful scholarship the minor characters stand out scarcely less clearly than the central figure himself, and such splendid descriptive passages as that of the battle of Pavia prove Mr. Hackett once again (as did his *Henry VIII*) a wholly admirable intermediary between sixteenth-century chroniclers and the twentieth-century reader.

The fact that the present age bears a somewhat tenuous title to be called a new Renaissance may be in part responsible for the momentary interest in the Tudors and their European contemporaries, and certainly it adds piquancy to many of Mr. Hackett's reflections on Renaissance politics. Mr. Philip Lindsay, however, finds his parallel a century earlier. " Are we not," he asks, " to-day doing exactly what they were doing in the fifteenth century, turning our backs to a dawn that as yet we do not understand but which frightens us ? " What they were doing in the fifteenth century does not, however, emerge very clearly from his study of the reign of Henry V of England, and the deficiency is not made good by a three-page appendix on the " colour " of the period. Henry himself had " all virtues and no sins," whereby it must be understood that it is virtuous to persecute Lollards and to pursue with fire and sword a sketchy territorial claim. The disparity between Shakespeare's Prince Hal and the historical figure of the young Henry is fairly dealt with, and it is evident that Mr. Lindsay, though prevented by the divinity that hedges a king from presenting anything like the psychological study which Mr. Hackett gives us of Francis I, has read widely and made strenuous endeavour to be impartial. But his manner of writing is in many places so remarkably reminiscent of *Little Arthur's England* that one supposes the book to be intended for a juvenile audience. If the Black Prince were really " adored by everyone," the authors of 1066 *and All That* ought to be told about it. Grammatical errors—the worst on page 69—further detract from a book over which trouble has been taken.

Mr. Eric Linklater's brisk sketch of Mary Stuart, originally published in Peter Davies' series of *Brief Biographies*, is now reissued in an illustrated edition. About Mary one has to have a theory, and Mr. Linklater cleverly supports the rather surprising one that she was undersexed. He mistrusts the Casket Letters, portrays Knox with malicious brilliance, and concludes with a burst of lyricism addressed to the land of his fathers.

FRANCIS WATSON

AIRSHIPS

Airships in Peace and War. By CAPTAIN J. A. SINCLAIR. *Rich and Cowan.* 18s.

The disaster to the United States Airship *Akron* was an excellent instance of the break-up and destruction of an airship by bad weather, and Captain Sinclair quotes the account of one of the three survivors, out of a company of seventy-six, Lieut.-Commander Wiley, who says :

> The angle up by the bow increased and I could feel that we were falling rapidly. I could no longer steer with both rudder controls broken, and I hung to the girder alongside the window and looked out to see if I could sight the water. I inquired the altitude, and the reply was " 300 feet." At the same time I sighted the waves through the window and gave the order : " Stand by for a crash."

Captain Sinclair's comment is : " The truth of the matter is that she was under control until she actually hit the water," which is certainly illuminating as showing what an officer with great experience of airships means by the words " under control."

Captain Sinclair argues that R.101 was not lost because of the sudden deflation of a forward gasbag, because the R.33 had twice been saved after a forward gasbag had ripped. He does not seem to allow for the fact that the R.101 was travelling at speed or for its greater length. But though a large portion of his book is perforce devoted to the record of disasters, Captain Sinclair is confident of the great part airships will play in the future :

> The truth of the matter is that aeroplanes have no chance whatever against airships in the service of long-distance, oversea routes. There can be no question at all of the fact that the future of world trade is bound up with the future of airship services.

According to Captain Sinclair " the truth of the matter " is always in favour of the airships and against all competitors—aeroplanes, flying boats, battleships, and aircraft carriers.

He believes that in the last war the submarine campaign was defeated by the British " blimps,"—no doubt they played a valuable part—and calls for a new airship service to protect our trade routes. Aircraft carriers, he declares, are obsolescent.

> The planes massed on the great deck of an aircraft carrier are all exposed to attack from the air, and it needs no great imagination to visualise what would happen if a *Metalclad* or a super-Zeppelin, operating from the clouds with engines muffled and directed by an observer in the sub-cloud car, were to hover, unseen and unheard, above the helpless planes.

But it requires no imagination at all to visualise what would happen to the super-Zeppelin if one of the " helpless planes " happened to be in the air : thousands of Londoners can remember watching such an incident, though of course it happened at night.

Since this book is a piece of propaganda in favour of the airship, it may be as well to summarise the case against it.

It is extremely difficult to make an airship strong enough to stand the strains of violent gusts without making it too heavy. Owing to the very small supply of helium gas, and the reluctance of the Americans to sell it, hydrogen has to be used, and air and hydrogen are an explosive mixture.

In war, airships are at the mercy of high-speed fighting aeroplanes. All existing types are slow by modern standards, and are not only far more costly (about half-a-million each), but are much more easily set on fire and totally destroyed. The only functions performed by airships in the last war were bombing raids—which can be more economically and efficiently performed by large aeroplanes, and scouting and anti-submarine work, which could be done by the auto-gyro. Incidentally Captain Sinclair, who declares " the future is in the air," does not mention the auto-gyro.

In time of peace the worst drawbacks of the airship are that it is expensive and inherently dangerous. It is at the mercy of really bad weather. It cannot be pegged down in absolute safety or quickly stowed away. Moreover, owing to the expansion of gas at great altitudes, the airship's range of height is small, or rather height has to be paid for by loss of gas. And the future of rapid transport is in flying at great heights. At low altitudes a steep dip means that a big airship may hit the ground. This was fatal to R.101.

So long as there was nothing better, there was a case for the airship ; to-day there is something better in every way. Aeroplanes can, if necessary, be refuelled in the air, and stay up for weeks. Fortunately Captain Sinclair is not likely to get the money he wants for airships. Enormous sums are being thrown away on battleships because we have a large class of Naval officers, but the airship men are very few in number. And Englishmen would have to become lighter-than-air-minded to be influenced by their propaganda.

DAVID GARNETT.

YOU CAN BE
SURE OF
SHELL

SEA FOOD

Sea Sequel to the Week-End Book. *Nonesuch Press.* 6s.

Prefaced by a poem of Harold Munro's in which occurred two lines heavy with the error of this generation :

Out in the country everyone is wise :
We can be only wise on Saturday.

the *Week-End Book* owed its immense success to the fact that it capitalised " amusingly " our inability to think of anything to do at the Week-End. " Amusingly," because everything after the War had to be amusing : If Mr. Joad is looking for evidence about our present day culture the *Week-End Book* is pretty well its epitome. It is an odd book that puts Donne, limericks, cocktail recipes and notes on the law of trespass next door to one another for an even odder and rather agreeable generation that demands the mixture in one dose—not caring to read of " some dead lover's ghost " unless they can be sure of finding how to mix a Bronx on the next page.

Sea Sequel continues the same tradition. The problem of how to spend one's leisure has spread to the sea, and the summer cruise appears, like Mr. Quennell's Leviathan :

Measureless drunkard of the bitter sea,
Insatiate, like some slow stain
Creeping on pleasure's face,
Like sudden misery.

The book sets out to be the book to take on a cruise ; first to elevate the mind with heroic verse :

When Kempenfelt went down
With twice four hundred men

then to release the imagination with Conrad, Herman Melville and Stephen Crane and to bring to general notice the fine original narratives of the old navigators such as Frobisher, Hawkins and Hudson, curiosities like Munck on the Scurvy and fantasies like the Book of Jonah. At the same time there has been put down such nautical information as the tonnages, speeds and histories of the great liners. Nautical terms are defined. One is instructed how to differentiate between cyclone and anti-cyclone. One is told about the compass and how to sail a yacht, how much to tip the deck steward and how many rings are on the captain's sleeve.

When I am at sea nautical literature is to me abominable. I certainly could not read Hakluyt in the Bay of Biscay. I prefer the longer and more arid novelists who have not a touch of water in them, Meredith versus the Atlantic, one bore to counteract another. Meredith, indeed, is excellent at sea. He eclipses the dull company. Consequently it is to the information of *Sea Sequel* that I would turn with the greatest pleasure. The literature is arm-chair sailing. Still, the verse anthology, like its predecessor, is select and excellent. There are a number of ballads and shanties too, most of which will be familiar, though I regret not seeing one I heard once in a pub in South Shields, whose lines, addressed to a lady, ran :

You've robbed every sailor,
You've skinned every tailor,
But you won't go walking Palatine Street no more.

I should like to be supplied with the rest of that forgotten ballade.

The three great mysteries of the sea—the Marie Celeste, the Sea Serpent and the Ships on the Ice—are briefly discussed. The editor seems pretty certain that the Ships on the Ice were really Franklin's *Erebus* and *Terror*. I do not know that it was very tactful to give a very long account of the sinking of the *Titanic* in a book of this kind. Here it may be noted that the old narratives are all infinitely superior to the new ones. One has only to turn to the masterly *Relacion Summaria de Don Diego Prado* to see what the literature of the sea lost when it grew out of its naiveté :

" After he sat down in his fashion, which is like women, the first thing he asked was, How was the King of Spain, his brother ? I answered in good health, glory be to God. What was his age ? I said twenty-five years. How many children had he ? At present two, the prince and an infanta. If he was a great sportsman with the round net for catching sardines and other fish. I replied, A fisher truly but not of sardines, but of kingdoms and that he had caught with his net more than half the world, with all the Indies, West and East, and the Philippines and the Moluccas, nearly up to Bachan. He said, according to that, he is indeed a great fisherman. He asked for Spanish wine, and drank three times, one after another, and the rest of the night he drank tobacco until he went to sleep on the carpet. I put my men on guard throughout the ship for they told me that this King was baptised, and a renegade, entirely through carnal vice."

Oddly enough, a touch of this naivete, which was rooted in the lost religious feeling of the Middle Ages, is to some extent recaptured in that brief account which Turgenev wrote of how in a storm he crossed from Hamburg to London with a little female monkey, which was the only other passenger.

Needless to say, the book is an excellent piece of production and it has been compiled with the catholicity of taste and dry wit which made the former Nonesuch Press publication a delight.

V. S. PRITCHETT

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

A Letter to a Young Lady on the Occasion of Her Approaching Marriage. By AMBROSE HOOPINGTON. *Nonesuch Press.* 3s. 6d.

In these days the divorce law of England and Wales has become rather an Aunt Sally for our young wits. I can remember the late Lord Halsbury refusing even to discuss Lord Russell's divorce Bill in 1902 on the ground that it was too ribald to merit discussion. Even my own little jokes of thirty years ago were ill received. In the course of a generation, however, public opinion has changed even though the law remains substantially unaltered. I doubt if the old gentlemen whom I knew in my youth would be much amused if they read on page 8 of this book that " adultery is gradually declining in status from a mortal sin to a mere legal fiction " nor would they have relished the additional comment on page 23 :

> The fact is that all these sins have been greatly overrated by interested persons. Fornication, I am assured, is not nearly so deadly as you might suppose from reading the litany ; and several others are described in legal text-books as carnal, indecent, abominable, and so forth on very inadequate grounds.

On the other hand this book, in spite of the writer's jesting on sacred subjects, contains some very useful hints :

> But you must conform to the accepted practice. You must share a room with somebody of the opposite sex and make certain that the chambermaids, reception clerks, hotel detectives and so forth who will have to give evidence against you are under no illusion as to what you are doing. At a well-run hotel they will not let you register yourself as " adulteress " in the visitor's book, and even explaining to them your object in staying there might annoy the management besides arousing the suspicions of the King's Proctor ; but you may carry out some simple manœuvre to cause yourself to be remembered, such as simulating extreme deafness, objecting to the food, or giving the chambermaid an exaggerated tip. This last is the most certain method, and though it is annoying to have to give a pound to a young woman who has forgotten to call you and giggled at you in a vulgar way as if she thought you were doing something improper, yet this is but a small item compared with the final bill of costs : and you must not forget that *divorce costs money*.

The doctrine of damages is very lucidly expounded on page 35 where the author maintains that in many cases it signifies no more than the " time-honoured practice of wife-selling," but on the other hand " it shows the high moral standard enforced by our divorce law, for nothing less than a permanent transfer of the lady from petitioner to co-respondent is envisaged." The author rather naughtily adds,

> An arrangement by which she should remain married to her original husband, but the co-respondent should have undisputed access to her so long as he made periodical payments to the husband, would never be sanctioned by the Court : in such cases the usual practice is for the co-respondent (if the term is applicable to such a settlement out of Court) to arrange for the husband to be employed at a high salary by one of the companies of which he is a director, which not only avoids publicity but saves a reasonable amount in income tax.

The author does not seem to appreciate that a decree of restitution for conjugal rights may still be valuable as a weapon for extracting money from a husband, although no husband seems to have found it very useful for extracting money from a wife. Up to page 40 the reader might be excused for thinking that his author was not a particularly modest man ; but even the author blenches at the discussion of nullity which he dismisses in a few words. " Nullity, of course, provides many cases of a curious nature, but I need not trouble you with the details of them, for you have no doubt satisfied yourself that your husband is not the kind of man against whom nullity proceedings can succeed, and that he should present such a petition against you is of course unthinkable. "

This little work is cordially recommended to readers who want to be amused without being harrowed.

E. S. P. HAYNES

THE HISTORY OF THE TIMES

DIEU ET MON DROIT

"The Thunderer" in the Making

Out New Year's Day, 1935

ON New Year's Day THE TIMES will celebrate its one hundred and fiftieth anniversary. The event will be marked by the publication of the first part of a "History of The Times," written, printed and published in Printing House Square.

The volume covers the period 1785-1841. These were the great formative years, in which the little four-page sheet, designed by its founder, John Walter, to advertise a new method of printing, was transformed by the genius of two men, John Walter II and Thomas Barnes, into "the leading journal in Europe" and a powerful institution in public affairs. The story of this astonishing development is the story of how the Press won place and power in the life of the nation. It has an added interest in that it is concerned as much with the chief personalities and political issues of the period as with the achievements of THE TIMES in the fields of journalism and newspaper production.

Much patient research has gone to the making of the book; much new knowledge has been collected. In particular the character of Barnes, the first man to become a responsible Editor in the modern sense of the term, is now clearly revealed.

"THE THUNDERER" IN THE MAKING, illustrated with a frontispiece in full colour and more than 30 portraits, facsimiles and caricatures, is a royal octavo volume of 500 pages. It will be published on January 1, and obtainable by order from all booksellers or from the Publisher, Printing House Square, London, E.C.4.

Price 15/- Net.

Postage: Inland 9d.; Abroad 1/-

SHORTER NOTICES

Regency Furniture 1795-1820. By M. JOURDAIN. *Country Life.* 21s.

The period covered by Miss Jourdain in this superbly illustrated quarto marks the departure from the baroque styles of Chippendale and his contemporaries to a severer taste, imposed partly by the reports of travellers in Greece and the East, and partly by a war-time scarcity of imported woods. In her survey of her period Miss Jourdain points out that it was in one way typical of the present time, in that designers thinking for themselves were departing freely from tradition. In the main the classic style prevailed, though there was an interesting Egyptian phase, as there must have been centuries before in Imperial Rome. There was also a Chinese revival, more realistic, perhaps, but less interesting than that which inspired the Chinese "Chippendale." Though the connoisseur will not complain, the social historian may regret that practically all the specimens Miss Jourdain has chosen to illustrate her period are the elaborate pieces made for the wealthy of the time. What may be called the parlour pieces made for middle-class patrons are only scantily represented. The most charming illustrations in the book are those showing the furnishing of the drawing-room at Southill, dated 1800, in which the most typical "Regency" style is seen at its best and completest. Miss Jourdain has some interesting notes on the furniture designers, amateur and professional, of the time.

A History of the Great War, 1914-1918. By C. R. M. F. CRUTTWELL. *Oxford University Press.* 15s.

Mr. Cruttwell has performed a remarkable feat in compressing so much fact and so much intelligent commentary on the history of the war into a single volume of six hundred pages. Though his criticisms are necessarily a little abrupt and plain-spoken, he is notably fair on the whole. He defends Haig against charges which have been considerably advertised since this book was written; and, though he is a convinced Easterner, he deals gently with the unfortunate King Constantine of Greece, and is always ready with excuses for Sir Ian Hamilton. He is a little less than fair to the Khedive, Abbas Hilmi, who never "elected to stay in Constantinople" after the outbreak of war, but, on the contrary, sought to return to Egypt and was peremptorily forbidden to do so by the British authorities. Mr. Cruttwell's summary of what he calls the "odd little war" against the Senussi is definitely inadequate; and he tells us nothing at all about the campaigns in East, West, and South-West Africa, nor about the Irish rebellion, or the Archangel "side-show." But every one-volume history of this world-wide conflict must be open to such criticisms. This author has, at any rate, given us a clear and unprejudiced picture of the war (in which he personally played a gallant part) in a volume of handy and popular size and written in popular style.

After Hitler's Fall—Germany's Coming Reich. By PRINCE HUBERTUS LOEWENSTEIN. *Faber and Faber.* 7s. 6d.

It is unfortunate that when Germans have shrouded themselves in a mysticism which seems incomprehensibly and infinitely foreign, they are most prone to announce their determination to interpret, to guide, and to save the rest of us. "Germany is the land," Prince Loewenstein writes, "whose people can, even less than others, be content within any given frontiers," and in another passage he speaks of "Germany, simple yet enlightened like Parsifal, helpless and wandering and yet the enthroned judge of all the peoples." "Germany's true mission," we are told, "is to be guardian of the western community . . . since its mission is spiritually to overcome the old dead frontiers." It is almost impossible not to be guilty of an involuntary, if insular, shudder as one reads these sentences, and Canning becomes a very St. George to have delivered Europe from the mystic yoke of a Holy League. To the simple western reader it will not seem so very different whether the coming Reich is Roman or Racial, whether it is Christ or Antichrist who directs it, when he finds, for instance, that evil-doers are to be branded and that "the whole system of justice is borne by the people," for the placarded pacifists and the people's courts of Nazi Germany appear to provide the very same system. When he reads that "legal transactions which conflict with the interests of the community will become invalid. . . . but in judging such transactions there will be no question of arbitrary interference . . ." he will feel perplexed, if not sceptical. Nor will he find consolation in the fact that this is a well-constructed, a well-written and a well-translated book.

The Money Muddler. By JAMES P. WARBURG. *Routledge.* 7s. 6d.

Here is another of those lively hybrids, part history, part economic exposition, part pamphleteering, which have come out in their dozens to explain or criticise Roosevelt's New Deal. We have had several from Irving Fisher, preaching the gospel of the Stable Dollar; Mr. James Warburg, in *The Money Muddle* now speaks out for the opposition. Though he does not believe monetary causes to lie at the root of our troubles, he is chiefly concerned to put up a case for the traditional sound dollar and the traditional international gold standard, as against the "honest" index-governed dollar of Irving Fisher and the "Committee for the Nation."

It is not, however, as a theoretical economist that Mr. Warburg shines most brightly. His introductory chapters on the theory of money are sound enough, but hardly outstanding, and he has some quite extraordinary *obiter dicta* on taxation, State control of banking, and other socialistic phenomena which he dislikes. It is when he takes his readers behind the scenes and shows them the horrified delegates to the Economic Conference discussing in private Roosevelt's famous message against stabilisation, or the complicated manoeuvres underlying the depreciation of the dollar, that his narrative grows fascinating. With all his theoretical shortcomings, the writer shows himself an acute and entertaining historian of recent events.

About Motoring

TRAFFIC FROM YOUR RIGHT ?

CERTAIN publicists are bombarding Mr. Hore-Belisha with appeals for the adoption of a code employed by some Continental countries, to the effect that every driver should yield precedence at road junctions to traffic approaching from his right. It is claimed with undeniable justice that under ordinary circumstances this simple rule enables traffic to sort itself out with no aid from a point policeman or an A.A. Scout. Jones and Brown rush up to a plus shaped crossing with four entries, and under existing law neither man has any rights. The result is that both take chances, or that the meeker man defers to the bolder, or that both stop, bowing and grimacing to each other. But under the off-side rule, if Jones is careering up the south leg of the plus sign, and Brown is tearing along the eastern leg, Brown—being on the offside of Jones—automatically takes the right of way, which is automatically conceded by Jones. The system, we are told, is simple, foolproof, and costs precisely nothing. There is no question at all that it possesses enormous merits when applied to sporadic traffic on comparatively empty roads. Herbert Spencer defined a tragedy as the murder of a lovely theory by a single nasty little fact. And critics of this "offside" code usually smother it with ridicule by inquiring what happens when four cars arrive simultaneously at a road junction of the plus sign pattern. Since each car must wait for another car approaching on the offside, it follows *ex hypothesi* that the four cars remain immobilised till the Last Trump, the mechanism growing rusty as the drivers become bald and grey. Advocates of the system are daunted for the moment, until at last some person oozing with robust common sense perceives that in actual fact four cars could never arrive simultaneously at a road crossing; one of the four must precede its rivals if only by a matter of millimetres, and so hold the key to the embroglio; it, being the first arrival, calmly assumes precedence over the car on its left, and the other three cars adopt their correct sequences. Anyhow, remarks another party to the dispute, awaking to sanity, if a miracle occurred, and four cars reached a crossing almost simultaneouly, the drivers would grin at each other, and eventually three of them would wave the fourth through after a hesitation infinitely less perilous and prolonged than the uncertainties which now hallmark any crossing unprovided with a point control. But the discussion throws into high relief the folly of mere academic theories. It is true that four cars seldom reach a junction simultaneously. But every experienced motorist can name a hundred junctions at which battalions of cars arrive in almost solid masses on rush occasions; and the off-side code will never sort them out neatly and safely. For example after an international Rugby match at Twickenham clever drivers experiment with a variety of suburban detours to reach the haven of the main roads which ultimately lead them home; and when the Twickenham car parks release their serried thousands of saloons, it might easily happen that three or four solid streams of cars should arrive almost simultaneously at some suburban T or plus sign crossing. Jones in his Bentley, let us imagine, heads one of these streams, and wins the race to the crossing by some unmistakable interval of (say) ten yards. He crosses at speed, assuming legal precedence of the stream on his nearside road; and his precedence is gleefully claimed and shared by the entire stream of which his Bentley is the spearpoint. In interminable succession they pour onwards, immobilising the angry streams waiting on the remaining two or three legs of the crossing. This illustration is, I know, quite as absurd as the classic citation of the four cars assumed to arrive simultaneously at an X crossing. But in actual experience any X crossing may carry such an incessant quadruple stream that the rule simply will not work smoothly; and in such other countries as toy with this code, it is never rigidly and legalistically applied, but serves as the basis of a convenient courtesy, wherever crossings are open to view the traffic is thin. This admission is by no means fatal to the proposed change in our law. For example, most road junctions which are permanently congested, are already controlled either by robot lights or by pointsmen. If the off-side rule were legally applied to all *uncontrolled crossings,* it could obviously be quite invaluable. If we motor down to Brighton or Worthing on a week-day, we shall traverse many lateral roads carrying light traffic, while the main London-coast roads are not too thronged on a week-day. At such points we shall find A.A. or R.A.C. pointsmen. They could be dispensed with on week-days by the importation of this Continental rule. On Sundays the pointsmen would need to be replaced, at any rate during the rush hours; otherwise both the London-coast roads and their lateral traverses would often be found jammed with cars, in which angry drivers vociferated annoyance. The proposed change has been repeatedly condemned by conferences of British experts. I did not serve on any of those conferences, but I should hazard a guess that the critics were mainly deterred by the mental picture of its failure at crowded crossings devoid of pointsmen. It is obvious that if we called in the lonely pointsmen who at present control rather idle crossings, we could afford a pointsman for all busy crossings; and the off-side rule would suffice to safeguard the places where traffic is sporadic and light. In France the rule now applies only to urban areas, because their rural roads contain so many blind entries, and fast through traffic refuses to pause at the mere threat of potential traffic approaching invisibly from the right. This hitch cannot occur when all minor road entries are rendered clear.

It is worthy of comment that this rule is at present utilised mainly in countries where traffic keeps to the right hand side of the road. It should operate still better under our rule of keeping to the left. At present whenever I drive up the southern leg of a plus sign crossing, I have to pause and peep both ways on the brink of that square of roadway which constitutes the neutral centre of the crossing. Under the proposed change, I should only have to look to my right; and the eastern leg is the easiest for me to inspect, since the empty width of the southern leg separates me from it and improves its visibility. But under the right hand rule of the road, I am jammed against the wall, house or hedge on my right, and being so blanketed, I get a better view of the western leg, which does not concern me in the least. The proposed off-side code would thus work better under British rules of the road than under the French rule.

Oddly enough, it would work even better if British cars had left hand steering, for the driver would then have a still wider angle of vision to his right. There are other reasons why Mr. Belisha might consider left-hand steering. Now that roads are so congested every foot of road width has acquired great importance; and in practice "kerb-shyness" reduces the practical width of a road by many feet, since no driver can see how close his near wheels are to the near-side kerb or to a vehicle on his left, and not many drivers can judge their near-side clearances accurately. Left-hand steering would kill "kerb-shyness." Both alterations deserve more consideration than they are receiving, though the change from right hand to left hand steering could only be gradual.

R. E. DAVIDSON

Week-end Competitions

No. 250

Set by Richard Church

It was recently stated in the press that English statesmen are at their best when they talk about books. I can imagine charming examples of this. For instance, I should like to hear Mr. J. H. Thomas on *The Testament of Beauty,* and I should like to have heard Arthur Balfour on *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes,* and Lord Curzon on *Ulysses.* We may yet hear Mr. Lloyd George on *Cold Comfort Farm.*

We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for an extract of not more than 350 words from one of these imaginary talks or from a talk by another statesman on a similarly appropriate book.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, January 4.
2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.
3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.
4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 105.—MIXED HOCKEY

During Christmas week, we have been running a mixed hockey contest. Seven teams were entered, and each played each of the others once. Scoring was on League principles—two points for a win, one point for a draw; and teams were placed according to points scored, or, where points scored were equal, according to goal average. When the teams were finally placed, it was found that no two had tied. Winnie's team won the championship, though Walter's scored most goals; Woozle's team were bottom. And the odd thing is that only seven goals were scored in all.

What was the score in the game between Woozle's team and Walter's?

PROBLEM 103.—LAURA'S LEGACY

Let x = Laura's age when I bought my Alfa-Romeo.
Let y = Laura's kid sister's age.
Let n = number of years since Alfa-Romeo was bought.

$$\text{Then } \overline{x+n}^3 - \overline{y+n}^3 - (x^3 - y^3) = 1{,}380$$

$$\text{i.e., } n(x-y)(x+y+n) = 460.$$

By inspection, only two solutions satisfy the terms of the problem:

(i) $x = 11 \quad y = 7 \quad n = 5$
(ii) $x = 12 \quad y = 7 \quad n = 4$

In either case, Laura's kid sister was 7 when the Alfa-Romeo was bought.

PROBLEM 102.—STARING YOU EXPERTS IN THE FACE

A set of Low's Cartoons goes to:
Miss Babette E. Stern, 1, Dollis Hill Lane, N.W.2.
There were 76 correct solutions.
Six points are awarded.

CALIBAN

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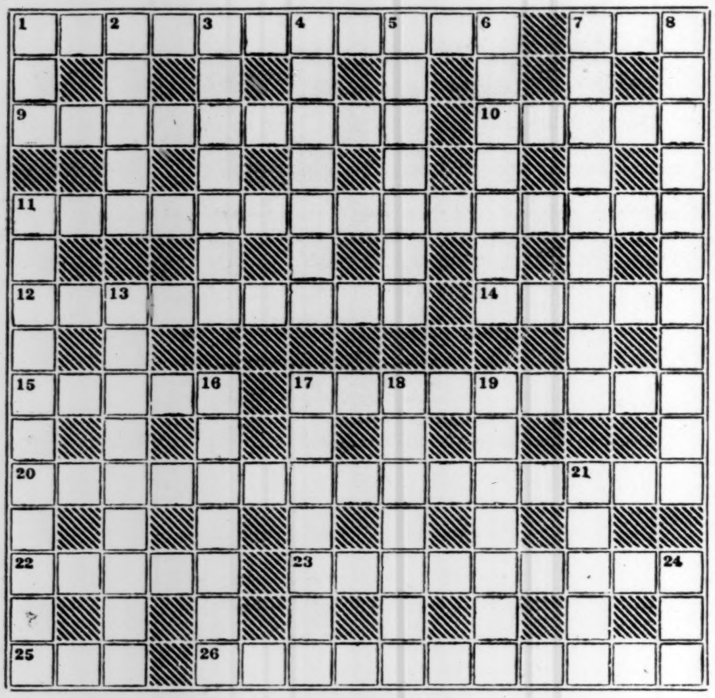
Secretary.

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 251

The sender of the first correct solution to be opened may choose as prize a copy of either *This England* or *The Playtime Omnibus*. Envelopes should be addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1, and must arrive not later than first post next Wednesday.



Set by L.-S.

The last week's winner is
Miss P. G. MacNaught, 55, Primrose Mansions, S.W.11.

ACROSS

1. Cat in place of feet.

7. Given a nightmare when she is mounted.

9. An Irishman suggests that the dance is painful.

10. Priestly wear for statuary on earth.

11. Behind the distant scenery?

12. Such things promise a good stretch.

14. A girl with me in the grass.

15. I call for it.

17. This total doesn't consist solely of noughts.

20. Turner who preceded Sir Stephen Killik.

22. Charge in it.

23. "Man's love is of man's life a thing apart, 'Tis woman's whole ——."

25. Give it to a graduate to wash in.

26. Printed paper weight?

DOWN

1. A refreshing place by the way.

2. Wavy description of the head on the beer.

3. Put this month above everything.

4. It's troublesome in Scotland when the French take to a good fellow.

5. Feeling of those who are not in the swim.

6. What the ghost of Hamet's father was not allowed to tell.

7. Where visitors would expect a warm reception.

8. What he said in 1874 is questionable.

11. Mosaic offerings.

13. A likely winner.

16. Does it make a female bullring?

17. An insect takes lime for nourishment.

18. The eleven that's just batted.

19. Expressly describes an unpunctuated document.

21. I helped to smash up the gent.

24. Telegram that precipitated a war.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

R	O	T	U	N	D	A	▨	F	I	S	H	P	O	T
E	▨	I	▨	O	▨	D	▨	A	▨	E	▨	E	▨	H
I	N	T	E	R	P	R	E	T	▨	L	A	R	G	E
N	▨	A	▨	T	▨	E	▨	H	▨	O	▨	M	▨	P
D	I	N	A	H	▨	S	H	E	E	P	F	A	I	R
E	▨	▨	▨	E	▨	S	▨	R	▨	▨	▨	N	▨	E
E	S	I	L	A	E	R	▨	C	O	C	K	E	R	S
R	▨	R	▨	S	▨	E	▨	H	▨	U	▨	N	▨	E
S	C	R	A	T	C	H	▨	R	I	B	S	T	O	N
L	▨	I	▨	▨	▨	E	▨	I	▨	B	▨	▨	▨	T
E	X	T	E	R	N	A	L	S	▨	Y	E	A	S	T
D	▨	A	▨	E	▨	R	▨	T	▨	H	▨	G	▨	I
G	A	B	L	E	▨	S	Y	M	P	O	S	I	U	M
E	▨	L	▨	L	▨	A	▨	A	▨	L	▨	L	▨	E
▨	W	E	A	S	E	L	▨	S	E	E	D	E	D	▨

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ESSENCE

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"The advance of capitalism and fascism to war: the advance of the working class to the united front: these are the two opposing world forces which hold the immediate future in their hands."

This is how R. P. DUTT (the Editor) describes the prospects for 1935 in the January Notes of the Month of

THE LABOUR MONTHLY

Other articles in this issue are "The New Deal for India," by Reginald Bridgeman; "Agriculture and Industry in Ireland," by George Gilmore, the well-known Irish Republican; "Dr. Schacht to the Rescue!"

Of especial interest is an article of Lenin (hitherto unpublished in English) in which he gives a critical appraisal of Rosa Luxembourg's famous illegal pamphlet (1916) pillorying the German workers' leaders for their support for the imperialist war—this despite the numerous resolutions to the contrary sworn to by them in the pre-war International. A warning for today!

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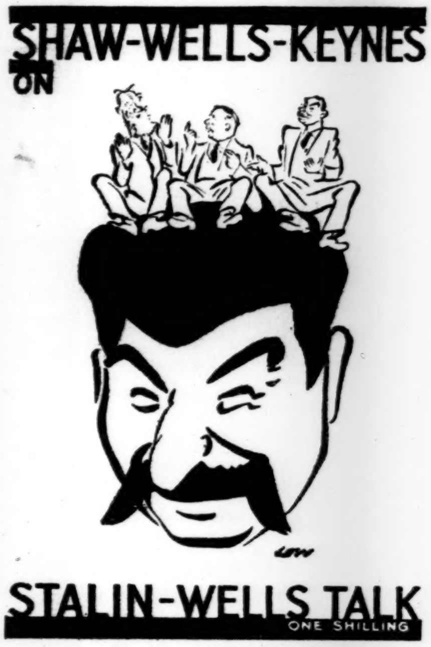
The verbatim record of the conversation between Stalin and H. G. Wells during the latter's recent visit to Moscow was published in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION of October 27th. A discussion of the talk followed in subsequent issues of the paper and drew interesting, provocative and entertaining contributions from Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, J. M. Keynes, Ernst Toller and others.

The whole of this discussion and the original Moscow "talk," supplemented by reproductions of LOW'S famous caricatures of Shaw, Wells and Keynes, and a cover design by the same artist, is now published in pamphlet form at ONE SHILLING



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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By TOREADOR

"THE FUTURE OF GOLD"—A REVIEW FOR POLITICIANS AND GOLD SHAREHOLDERS

To the politician on holiday, or to the City worker idling in his office this holiday season, I recommend the reading of Dr. Einzig's latest book, *The Future of Gold.** And if the files are available, I would ask the reader to turn to the *Financial News* of December 12th, 13th, 14th and 19th, in which Major Angas attacks Dr. Einzig and Dr. Einzig hits back at Major Angas. As everyone knows, Dr. Einzig is a prolific writer who treats financial affairs in serial form after the manner of those serialised film "thrillers" which we used to see in the early days of the cinema industry. This book, I think, is the best of the Einzig "thrillers." It debates a serious question; it has something to say which is worth while; it argues the case clearly and its conclusions provoke discussion. Holders of gold shares should not miss it.

* * *

Briefly, Dr. Einzig does not believe it possible that the world will abandon the gold standard. First of all, he cites the primitive gold "instinct." "It is a great blessing," he says, "that there is one commodity which is universally accepted without limitation in return for goods and services. If there were no such commodity it would be the duty of economists and statesmen to do their utmost to invent one, as, in its absence, it would be extremely difficult for the nations to accumulate reserves against a rainy day." Secondly, there is the vested interest in gold. "The gold standard will be retained," he goes on, "not because a majority of people are convinced that it is to the interest of mankind to do so, but largely because those countries possessing large gold stocks will work in favour of its retention." Great Britain also has a vested interest, as the British Empire produces 70 per cent. of the world's current output of gold. Thirdly, the technical difficulties of demonetising gold would in themselves be sufficient, Dr. Einzig thinks, to discourage any inclination on the part of Governments to abandon gold. "Against what," he asks, "would the opponents of the gold standard sell the accumulated gold stocks?" Dr. Einzig does not hesitate to state dogmatically: "The gold standard will not be abandoned."

* * *

All these arguments seem to me vulnerable. First, the reserve question—the accumulation of gold against a rainy day. Surely Dr. Einzig will agree that national gold reserves, except in a few cases, are entirely inadequate to meet the differences arising in the current balances of international payments during periods of boom and slump. And as soon as a country sees the possibility of its gold reserves being exhausted it invariably suspends the gold standard. International trade can certainly be conducted under a system of paper currencies, provided the nations keep "clearing accounts" and allow differences in their international balances of payments to be adjusted over a period by alterations in their exchange rates. (I agree that this requires the abolition of unreasonable tariffs and quotas, but so does the gold system if it is to work properly.) As regards the vested interests and the technical difficulties of demonetising gold, I admit that there appears to be no chance of the world as a whole abandoning gold, but Dr. Einzig has not dealt with the possibility of half the world abandoning gold and the other half staying on. Surely there is a distinct possibility of such a dénouement.

* * *

Dr. Einzig, however, is not an adherent of the orthodox monetary school. He is convinced that the gold standard will never be restored in this country in the form in which it operated before 1931. "It is unthinkable," he says, "that on a fine Thursday morning at a meeting of the Court of the Bank of England twenty-six merchant bankers should be once more in a position to decide that, since the Bank lost a few million pounds of gold, a few hundred thousands of workmen should be thrown out of employment through an increase of the bank rate and restriction of credit, so as to readjust the monetary position." Dr. Einzig, therefore, believes that Great Britain will modify the gold standard and that other countries on a gold basis will follow the British lead, "as they usually do in matters of monetary system." As to the modifications he wants, Dr. Einzig does not go into great detail, but he would like to see the internal use of gold reduced to a minimum, stabilisation effected at a price of gold equivalent to a 50 cents gold dollar and a 10*s*. gold pound, and powers reserved to change the new parities. "A return to the gold standard," he says, "implies the maintenance of the fluctuation of sterling in terms of gold within reasonably narrow limits—possibly 5 per cent., as is suggested by Mr. J. M. Keynes." The higher the price of gold in the stabilisation agreement the less likely are the new parities to be revised at a later date.

* * *

The difficulties of arriving at a stabilisation agreement are great but not, in Dr. Einzig's view, insurmountable. On page 57: "Sooner or later an understanding will be reached which, if not equally satisfactory to everybody, will not at any rate create untenable positions. . . . It is impossible for all currencies to be under-valued in relation to each other. It is, however, quite possible for all currencies to be under-valued in terms of gold. This is exactly what is likely to happen. The over-valuation of a currency places the country concerned at a disadvantage if it necessitates direct deflation to adjust its prices to the world level. If, however, all currencies are under-valued in terms of gold, then there can be no question of any deflation in any country. A rise in commodity prices is likely to follow everywhere. The difference between the national price-levels created through the under-valuation of some currencies and the over-valuation of others can be offset by the different degree in which prices are allowed to rise in various countries." . . . "Failing that, every country would choose its own level of stabilisation without regard to the others and the chances are that countries with over-valued currencies would in the long run have to devalue once more." This all sounds delightfully simple. No doubt, if the gold standard is to be restored universally, a 50 per cent. devaluation is the easiest way, but it is obvious that the European "gold bloc" are much too frightened to make such a plunge. Drastic devaluation is feared by them as being inflationary. If the gold bloc become unable any longer to trade with their currencies on the old gold parities, it is much more likely that they will adopt the German "blocking" system, with different kinds of money for different purposes, than that they will suspend the gold standard or devalue their currencies for all purposes. Italy, apparently, is already moving in the German direction, and I hear that France is likely to fix an exchange of 100 francs to the £ for the tourist traffic.

* * *

I must add that Dr. Einzig is not immediately optimistic about stabilisation. "The stabilisation of sterling, and most other currencies which are at present off the gold standard, is not likely to take place for at least another year or two." But I am not convinced that the gold bloc will be any readier to accept a 50 per cent. devaluation even in 1936. They will probably remain scared of an inflation. Dr. Einzig does not believe that the rise in commodity prices will be sufficient to cancel out the gold surplus created through a drastic devaluation of currencies, but this is entirely a matter of opinion. Mankind moves from one extreme to another. If a gold shortage was possible, a gold glut (for currency purposes) is possible. If the old gold standard was so abused as to lead to a slump in commodity prices, and the writing up of the currency value of gold, an abuse of the new gold standard is possible, leading to an inflation of commodity prices and the writing down of the currency value of gold. What makes me distrust Dr. Einzig's stabilisation agreement for writing up the price of gold by 100 per cent. is the fact that a 50 per cent. devaluation all round would still leave the world's maldistribution of gold uncorrected. There would still be too much gold in France, Holland, Switzerland and America relative to the gold in what is now known as the "sterling" area. Stabilisation without a redistribution of the world's gold stocks is not helpful.

* * *

My sympathies lie with Major Angas's attack on the gold standard, for theoretically it is the worst and wickedest of monetary systems. Stable money and stable exchanges are mutually incompatible, and the gold standard, by pretending to achieve both, is a liar. "It is the gold standard," says Major Angas, "which in the main prevents continuously high profits and employment in most industries, and as soon as men realise it they will abandon it. . . . Its inherent inefficiency will gradually cause it to slide out of use." It would not be surprising to see it slide out of use for half the world. But let the gold shareholders take heart! Nations are proverbially stupid about their economic affairs. The habit of digging up gold from underground in order to hide it again in underground vaults has become a strong human instinct—like war.

**The Future of Gold.* By PAUL EINZIG. 135 pages including 29 pages of Appendices. Macmillan & Co. 7*s*. 6*d*.

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HIS MAJESTY'S.	**"Mary Read."**	Wed. & Sat.
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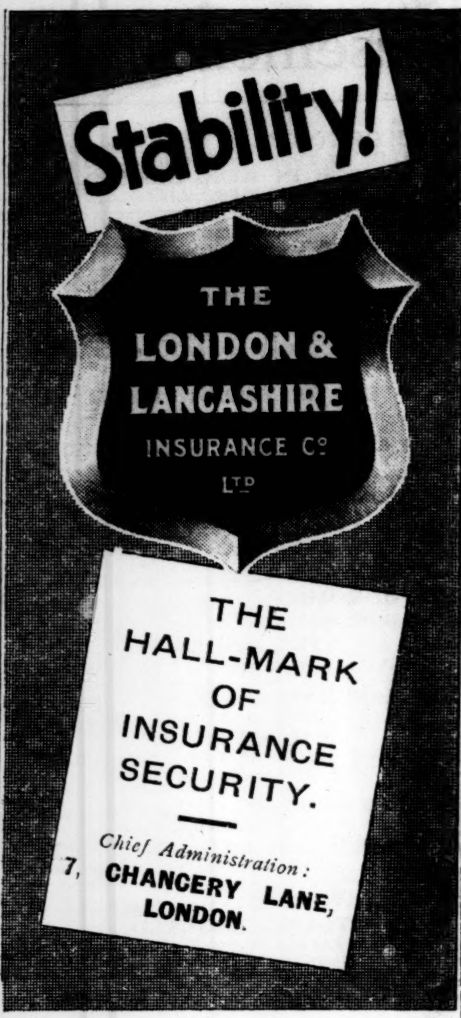

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